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Choice Poetry.

THE FROST SPIRIT.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

He comes, he comes—the Frost Spirit comes! You may trace his footstep now, On the sward woods and blasted fields, And the brown hills' withered bow, He has smitten the leaves of the grey old trees, Where the pleasant dream came forth, And the winds that follow whenever he goes, Have shaken them down to the earth.

BE KIND. Be kind to thy father—for when they were young, He loved thee so fondly as he! He taught the first accents that fell from thy tongue, And joined in thy innocent glee. Be kind to thy father—for now he is old, His locks intermingled with grey; His footsteps are feeble, and his voice is hoarse— Thy father is passing away.

Select Tale.

THE KINLOCH ESTATE, AND HOW IT WAS SETTLED.

CHAPTER I. "Mildred, my daughter, I am faint. Run and get me a glass of cordial from the buffet." The girl looked at her father as he sat in the bamboo chair on the piazza, his face just set in a deadly pallor. She ran for the cordial, and poured it out with a trembling hand. "Shan't I go for the doctor, father?" "No, my dear, the spasm will pass off presently." But his face grew more ashy pale, and his jaw dropped.

(for it was she, just returned from her drive.) "Lucy Ransom, what are you blubbering about? Here on the piazza, and with your flat-iron! What is the matter?" "Matter enough!" said Lucy. "See!—see Mr. Squire!" But the sobs were too frequent. She became choked, and fell into an hysterical paroxysm. By this time Mrs. Kinloch had stepped upon the piazza, and saw the drooping head, the dangling arms, and the changed face of her husband. "Dead! dead!" she exclaimed. "My God! what has happened? Mildred, who was with him? Was the doctor sent for? or Squire Clamp? or Mr. Rook? What did he say to you, dear?" And she tried to lift the sobbing child, who still clung to the stiffening knees where she had so often climbed for a kiss. "Oh, mother! is he dead?—no life left?" "Calm yourself, my dear child," said Mrs. Kinloch. "Tell me, did he say anything?" Mildred replied, "He was faint, and before I could give him the cordial he had asked for, he was almost gone. The blacksmith," he said, "and for Ralph Hardwick," then he said something of the words which were on his lips. She could say no more, but gave way to uncontrollable tears and sobs.

The sudden death had caused. Administration was granted to the widow, conjointly with Squire Clamp, the lawyer, and the latter was appointed guardian for Mildred during her minority. Squire Clamp was an ill-favored man, heavy browed and bald, and with a look which in a person of less consequence, would have been called "hang-dog"—owing partly, no doubt, to the tribulation he had suffered from his vixen spouse, whose tongue was now happily silenced. He was the town's only lawyer, (a fortunate circumstance,) so that he could frequently manage to receive fees for advice from both parties in a controversy. He made all the wills, deeds, and contracts, and settled all the estates he could get hold of. But no such prize as the Kinloch property had ever before come into his hands. If Squire Clamp's reputation for shrewdness had belonged to an irreligious man, it would have been of unquestionable character; but as he was a zealous member of the church, he was protected from assaults upon his integrity. If there were suspicions, they were kept close, not bruited abroad. He was now an almost daily visitor at the widow Kinloch's. What was the intricate business that required the constant attention of a legal adviser? The settlement of the estate, so far as the widow knew, was an easy matter. The property consisted of the dwelling-house, a small tract of land near the village, a manufactory at the dam, by the side of Ralph Hardwick's blacksmith shop, and money, plate, furniture, and stocks. There were no debts. There was but one child, and after the assignment of the widow's dower, the estate was Mildred's. Nothing, therefore, could be simpler for the administrators. The girl trusted to the good faith of her step-mother, and the justice of the lawyer, who now stood to her in the place of a father. She was an orphan, and her innocence and child-like dependence would doubtless be a sufficient spur to the consciences of her protectors. So the girl thought, if she thought at all—and all charitable people were bound to think. How weirdly the days passed during the month after the funeral! The shadow of death seemed to darken everything. Doors creaked dimly when they were opened. The room where the body had been laid, seemed to have grown a century older than the other parts of the once bright and cheerful house—its atmosphere was so stagnant and full of mould. The family spoke only in suppressed tones; their countenances were as sad as their garments. All this was terrible to the imprisable, imaginative, and naturally buoyant temper of Mildred. It was like dwelling in a tomb, and her heart cried out for very loneliness. She must do something to take her mind out of the smoky vault—she must resume her relations with the dwellers in the upper air. All at once she thought of her father's last words—of Ralph Hardwick and the obony cabinet. It was in the next room. She opened the door, half expecting to see some bodiless presence in the silent space. She could hear her own heart beat beneath the tickings of the great watch clock, as she stepped across the floor. How still was everything! The air tingled in her ears as though now disturbed for the first time. She opened the cabinet, which was not locked, and pulled out the middle drawer. She found nothing but a dried rose-bud and a lock of sunny hair wrapped in a piece of yellowed paper. Was it her mother's hair? As Mildred remembered her mother, the color of her hair was dark, not golden. Still it might have been cut in youth, before its hue had deepened. And what a world of mystery, of feeling, of associations there was in that scentless and withered rose-bud! What fair hand had first plucked it? What pledge did it carry? Was the subtle aroma of love ever blended with its fragrance? Had her father borne it with him in his wanderings? The secret was in his coffin. The struggling lips could not utter it before they were stiffened into marble. Yet she could not believe that these relics were the sole things to which he had referred. There must have been something that more nearly concerned her—something in which the blacksmith or his nephew was interested.

Everybody knew that she was poor, and she knew that everybody knew it; yet so long as she was not in absolute want, and the poor-house, that habitar of honest poverty, was yet far distant, she managed to keep a cheerful heart, and visited her neighbors on terms of entire equality. At this time Walter Kinloch's wife died, leaving an only child. During her sickness, Mrs. Branning had been sent for to act as nurse, and temporary housekeeper, and, at the urgent request of the widower, remained for a time after the funeral. Weeks passed, and her house was still tenanted. Mildred had become so much attached to the motherly widow and her son, that she would not allow the servants to do anything for her. So, without any definite agreement, their relations continued. By-and-by the village gossips began to query and surmise. At the sewing-society the matter was fully discussed. Mrs. Greenfield, the doctor's wife, admitted that it would be an excellent match, "just a child apiece, both on 'em well brought up, into good company, and all that; but, land's sakes! he, with his mint o' money, ain't a-goin' to marry a poor widdy that ha'n't got nothin' but her husband's picture and her boy—not he!" Others insinuated that Mrs. Branning knew what she was about when she went to Squire Kinloch's, and his wife was "most gone with consumption." "Twasn't a mate strange that little Mildred took to her so kindly; plenty of women could find ways to please a child, if so be they could have such a chance to please themselves." The general opinion seemed to be that Mrs. Branning would marry the Squire, if she could get him; but that as to his intentions, the matter was quite doubtful. Nevertheless, after being talked about for a year, the parties were duly published, married, and settled down into the quiet routine of country life. Doubtless the accident of daily contact was the secret of the match. Had Mrs. Branning been living in her own poorly-furnished house, Mr. Kinloch would hardly have thought of going to seek her. But as mistress of his establishment she had an opportunity to display her housewifely qualities, as well as to practice those nameless arts by which almost any clever woman knows how to render herself agreeable. The first favorable impression deepened, until the widower came to believe that the whole parish did not contain so proper a person to be the successor of Mrs. Kinloch, as his housekeeper. Their union, though childless, was as happy as common; there was nothing of the romance of a first attachment—little of the tenderness that springs from fresh sensibilities, for she at least was of a matter-of-fact turn. But there was a constant and hearty good feeling, resulting from mutual kindness and deference. If the step-mother made any difference in her treatment of the two children, it was in favor of the gentle Mildred. And though the Squire naturally felt more affection for his motherless daughter, yet he was proud of his step-son, gave him the advantages of the best schools, and afterwards sent him for a year to college. But the lad's spirit was too buoyant for the sober notions of the Faculty. He was king in the gymnasium, and was minutely learned in the natural history and botany of the neighborhood; at least, he knew all the haunts of birds, rabbits and squirrels, as well as the choicest orchards of fruit. After repeated admonitions without effect, a letter was addressed to his step-father by vote at a Faculty-meeting. A damsel at service in the President's house overheard the discussion, and found means to warn the young delinquent of his danger; for she, as well as most people who came within the sphere of his attraction, felt kindly toward him. The stage-coach that conveyed the next morning's mail to Innisfield, carried Hugh Branning as a passenger. Alighting at the post-office, he took out the letter superperscribed in the well-known hand of the President, pocketed it, and returned by the next stage to college. This frank only moved the Squire to mirth, when he heard of it. He knew that Hugh was a lad of spirit—that in scholarship he was by no means a dunce; and as long as there was no positive tendency to vice, he thought but lightly of his boyish peccadilloes. But it was impossible for such irregularities to continue, and after a while Mr. Kinloch yielded to his step-son's request, and took him home. Next year it was thought best that the young man should go to sea, and a mid-shipman's command was procured for him. Now, for the second time, after an absence of three years, Hugh was at home in all the dignity of navy blue, anchor buttons, glazed cap and sword. [TO BE CONTINUED.] Mr. Bright, of Indiana, has offered a resolution in the Senate, calling for information as to when the new Senate Chamber will be ready. The Cincinnati Gazette thinks his present sentiment is doubtless very uncomfortable since the late news from Indianapolis, and hence his solicitude. Practice says the unity of the Democratic party is pleasingly illustrated by the fact that, while the President recommends specific duties, his Secretary of the Treasury devotes his report to an argument against them.

Miscellaneous.

LOST DILLIE.

BY ALICE GARRY. Don't you remember the old apple tree, That grew in the edge of the meadow; And the ravings whose thitherward straying with me, There over the sward lay so shadowy? Wait! the black of the apples that were so long, Which threw o'er her cheek its soft splendor; And the wild birds' sound as that lovingly sang, Which made her low wails so tender? You remember the bridal time, bright with the flow Of the cup as dew-drops as cherry; And the little white-clothes, always a-glow With the sweet smile of Dillie, my dearie! When her blue eyes dropped mournful and lowly; How sadly she watched for the footstep that came Each night—time more slowly and slowly! The path going down to the apple tree, still Winds over the slope of the meadow; The dear little white-clothes hang over the wall, But the roses run wild in its shadow! Don't you remember the ivy-green crocus red? We need to think sometimes and dream? Beneath the blue marble, just under the birch, Lies Dillie, lost Dillie, my dearie!

Interesting Discoveries in Athens.

During the last week of October interesting archaeological discoveries were made in course of the excavations that are now proceeding on the Acropolis. Among the things brought to light is an image of Minerva, in a mutilated state, without head, hands or feet, having on the breast a head of Medusa, and wearing a garment extending to the feet. Pedestals with inscriptions have been found. On one of them stands the statue of the comic poet, Philemon, son of Damon; on another a statue erected by the Athenians in honor of Julius Cæsar; and upon the other two are inserted the names of the gate-keepers of the Acropolis. A pillar bears a votive offering of Nicaretos of the Attic Demos Peleces. There is also a pedestal five feet in height, on which the people of Gythium erected a statue to Claudius Atticus, (Herodes,) styling him the benefactor of the nation, and founder and savior of the city. Pieces of slabs, with parts of public decrees, &c., inscribed upon them, have also been discovered. A few days previously the workmen had brought to light a wide stairway of ten steps, leading into the Parthenon on the West side, and an inscription mentioning an unknown structure in the Acropolis, called the Chalcotheke—a receptacle for brass vessels or instruments; also a part of a Quadriem, in relief, in which the rowers are very spiritedly represented. From the figure of a man lying on the deck, wearing the tiara and trousers, it is supposed that this is a Persian quadriem, taken probably at Salamis, or in some other naval battle. Translated from an Athens paper, the Providence Journal, Dec. 16.

Useful and Curious.

Extraordinary Wager.

A few years ago a wager was laid as follows: "I will bet any man one hundred pounds that he cannot make a million strokes with pen and ink within a month. They were not to be mere dots or scratches, but full down strokes, such as form the child's first lesson in writing." A gentleman accepted the challenge. The month allowed was the lunar month, of only twenty-eight days; so that, for the completion of the undertaking, an average of thirty-six thousand strokes per diem was required. This, at sixty per minute or three thousand six hundred per hour—and neither the human hand nor the human intellect can be expected to do more—would call for ten hours' labor in every four and twenty. With a proper feeling of the respect due to the observance of the Sabbath, he determined to abstain from his work on Sundays; and by this determination he diminished by four days the period allowed him; at the same time, by so doing he increased the daily average of his strokes to upwards of forty-one thousand. On the first day he executed about fifty thousand strokes; on the second nearly as many. But at length after many days, the hand became stiff and weary, the wrist swollen, and it required the almost constant attendance of some assiduous relation or friend to besprinkle progress over the paper, with a lotion calculated to relieve and invigorate it. On the twenty-third day, the million strokes, exceeded by some few thousands, "to make assurance doubly secure," are accomplished; and the piles of paper that exhibit them testify that to the courageous heart, the willing hand, and the energetic mind, nothing is impossible. These interesting papers were claimed and received by the person who paid the wager.

HUNTER FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

The recent nomination of Letcher for Governor of Virginia is regarded as a triumph of what is known as the Hunter faction over the Wise faction. This fact places Hunter ahead of all competitors for the nomination of the Charleston Convention. The blow is looked upon as no less serious to the prospects of Douglas, and the war made upon him by the Administration men will doubtless annihilate his claims. Under these circumstances it is no ways improbable that Senator R. M. T. Hunter will be the sacrifice offered in the next Presidential contest by the Democracy in atonement for their iniquities. May the gods of office receive it and be lenient to their wickedness.

THE RUTLAND REFORMERS.

At the recent convention held at Rutland, Vt., one of the lunatics used the following language: "Rather than a single slave should be held in bondage, down with the Union; down with the Church; down with the Bible; and let all go to hell and damnation." Pretty reformers these. Who needs reforming so much as they?

ALTERNATIVE NAMES.

The Brooklyn Eagle does not like alteration, as applied to *nommes de plume*. It says: "There is a want of genuine common sense in the selection of such names as Grace Greenwood, Fanny Fern, Minnie Myrtle, Lottie Linwood, Susan Sourwood, Flirtilla Fidget, and Wilhelmina Wiggletail. We never read such effusions, unless officially obliged to."

MARRIAGE OF KINRED.

A bill has passed the House of Representatives of Georgia, by a vote of 58 to 52, prohibiting the intermarriage of first cousins, under a severe penalty, and cutting off the inheritance of issue. The preamble to the bill asserts that many deformations of mind and body are of congenial origin from the practice of near kindred intermarrying with each other.

THE HON. KENNETH RAYNER.

The Hon. Kenneth Rayner, of North Carolina, has written a letter to a political committee at Wilmington, Del., in which he takes strong ground against the Kansas policy of the Administration, and in favor of protection to American industry, which he regards as a national, and not as a Northern question.

THE RECENT EXECUTION OF A WOMAN IN PENNSYLVANIA.

Called up the old question: "Should women be hanged for murder?" We used to be on the negative side of the debate; but now, as women insist on equal rights with the men, we think both sexes should hang together."—Louisville Journal.

NOTEWORTHY MARRIAGE.

A marriage took place in Hartford, a few days since, between two persons of high repute, viz: J. Warren Newcomb, Jr., great-grandson of General Joseph Warren, and Mary S., youngest daughter of the late Dr. George Sumner, and great-granddaughter of Gen. Israel Putnam.

AN ANGUSTA (ME.) PAPER TELLS A STORY about a dance between a chap named Shellings, and a Backsack gal called Big Sis. They danced 17 hours and 57 minutes, when Big Sis ceased and took a minutes, when Big Sis ceased and took a minutes with the brand tray.

HARMONIOUS (?) DEMOCRACY.

The Louisville (Ky.) Democrat, of the 11th, speaks thus of its brother "Nationals" in the North: "The New York Democracy are making fools of themselves, as usual. See the dispatches. It is a somewhat startling fact, that the revenue of the Post Office Department falls some eight millions per annum short of its expenses."

THE DISTANCE FROM THE EARTH TO THE SUN INCREASING.

The German journals have given some tables which prove that the distance between the earth and sun is increasing annually, and argue from it that the increasing humidity of our summers and the loss of fertility by the earth, are to be attributed solely to this circumstance.

RECENT MEDICAL RESEARCH HAS THROWN some curious light upon the action of cheese in promoting digestion.

When the curd of milk is exposed to the air in a moist state for a few days at a moderate temperature, it begins gradually to decay, to emit a disagreeable odor, and to ferment. When in this state, it possesses the property, in certain circumstances, of inducing a species of chemical change and fermentation of other moist substances with which it is brought in contact; it acts as does sour leaven when mixed with sweet dough. Now, old and partially decayed cheese acts in the same way when introduced into the stomach. It causes chemical changes gradually to commence among the particles of food which has previously been eaten, and thus facilitates the dissolution which necessarily precedes digestion.

THE PHILADELPHIA LEDGER GROWS eloquent over the plentiful promise of buckwheat cakes, and gives a recommendation as follows: Buckwheat cake! One Buckwheat cake "differs from another in glory," yet not one in a thousand is made right. Yet of all things it is the easiest to cook, if the meal is made right. To every three handfuls of buckwheat, add one of good heavy oats; grind them together as if there was only buckwheat; then fill you have cakes always light and always brown; to say nothing of the greater digestibility, and the lightening of spirits, which are equally certain. He who feeds on buckwheat may be grim and lethargic, while he of the oatmeal will have exhilaration of brain and contentment of spirit.

THE FOLLOWING VERSE CONTAINS every letter in the English alphabet except "a."

It is a question whether any other in English rhyme may be produced (in print) without the letter "a," which is a letter more used than any other: "A jovial certain once, such his trade, And tax his fancy's might, To quit in vain, the Vice upon plate, That would it were in right."

HEADACHE DROPS.—Alcohol, 2 quarts; Castile-soap, three ozs.; camphor, one oz.; ammonia, two ozs.; bath fore-head and temples.