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Choice Poetry.

THE SLAVE'S DREAM.

By FRED W. LINSFORD.

Behold the engagement ring he lay,
In his hand he held it;
His heart was there, his manly hand
Was raised in the air;
And he said, in a voice of deep,< deep
Sorrow, "I am a slave!"

With through the landscape of his dream
The lovely Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm trees on the plain,
Came more a king he stood,
And heard the shouting, cheering
Of the multitude around.

He saw, he saw, his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clung to him, they clung to him,
They held him by the hand;
A low wail from the daughter's side,
And fell upon the sand.

And then he saw, he saw, he saw
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JOHN TAYLOR, The Mission of the Backwoods

By JOHN TAYLOR.

I can never forget the first vision of John Taylor. It was in the court-house at Lewisburg, Conroy county, Ark., in the summer of 1838. The occasion still possessed a terrible interest. A vast concourse of spectators had assembled to witness the trial of a young and beautiful girl on a indictment for murder. The Judge waited at the moment for the sheriff to bring in the prisoner, and the eyes of the impetuous multitude all centered on the door, when suddenly a stranger entered, whose appearance riveted the universal attention.

Here is his portrait—a figure tall, lean, sinewy, and straight as an arrow; a face pale, hollow, and twitching incessantly with nervous irritability; a brow broad, bearing, and massive, seemed with wrinkles, but no frown; for he was scarcely forty; eyes reddish yellow, like the watchful eagle, as bright and piercing; and finally, a mouth with lips of cast iron, thin, curled, cold, and sneering, the intense expression of which looked the living embodiment of an unbreathed curse. He was habited in a suit of new buckskin, ornamented after the fashion of Indian costume, with hues of every color of the rainbow. Elbowing his way through the crowd, and apparently unconscious that he was regarded as a phenomenon, needing explanation, this singular being advanced, and with the hearty air of a king ascending the throne, seated himself within the bar, thronged as it was with the disciples of Coke and Blackstone, several of whom, it was known, esteemed themselves as far superior to those old and famous masters. The contrast between the onlooker and the defendant, especially the rigidity of the latter, excited the curiosity of the spectators, and the young members began to suppress and utter, which soon grew louder, and swept around the whole circle. They doubtless supposed the intruder to be some wild hunter of the mountains, who had never before seen the interior of a hall of justice. Instantly, the cause of the laughter, he turned his head gradually, so as to give each a full view; his lips curled with a smile of infinite scorn; his yellow eyes shot arrows of lightning; his tongue protruding through his teeth, literally withered like a serpent, and exhibited its most appalling poison in a single word:

"Savage!"

No man can describe the defiant force which he threw into that term; no pencil can paint the infernal frown of his countenance, although it hardly exceeded a whisper. But he accented every letter as if it were a separate emission of fire that scorched his quivering lips; laying horrible emphasis on S, both at the beginning and end of the word—

"Savage!"

It was the growl of a red tiger in the hiss of a rattlesnake!

"Savage!"

The general gaze, however, was immediately diverted by the advent of the fair prisoner, who came in, surrounded by the guard. The apparition was enough to drive a saint mad. Here was a style of beauty to bewilder the faintest imagination and melt the coldest heart, leaving in both the imagination and heart a gleaming picture mangled in fire, and fixed in a frame of gold from the stars. It was the spell of an enchantment to be felt as well as seen. You might feel it in the flesh of her countenance, clear as a sunbeam, brilliant as the iris; in the contour of her features, symmetrical, as if cut by the chisel of an artist; in her hair of rich auburn ringlets flowing without a break, softer than silk, finer than gossamer; in her eyes, blue as the heaven of a southern summer, large, liquid, beaming; in her motions, graceful, swimming like the gentle waftures of a bird's wing in the sunny air; in the figure, slight, ethereal—a sylph's or a seraph's, and more than all, in the everlasting smile of the rosy lips, so arched, so serene, so like the starlight, and yet possessing the power of magic or of magnetism, to thrill the beholder's heart.

As the unfortunate girl, so tastefully arrayed, so incomparable as to personal charms, calm and smiling, took her place before the bar of the judge, a murmur of approbation arose from the multitude, which the prompt interposition of the sheriff, by a stern order of "silence!" could scarcely repress from swelling to a deafening cheer. The judge turned to the prisoner:

"Emma Miner, the court has been informed that your counsel—Colonel Linton—is sick; have you yet employed any other?"

She answered, in a voice sweet as the nightingale, and clear as the song of the skylark:

"My enemies have bribed all the lawyers—even my own—to be sick! but God will defend the innocent!"

At this response, so touching in its simple pathos, a portion of the auditors burst into applause, and the rest wept. On the instant, however, the stranger, whose appearance had previously excited so much admiration, started to his feet, approached the prisoner, and whispered something in her ear. She bounded six feet from the floor, uttered a piercing shriek, and then stood trembling as if in the presence of a ghost from eternity; while the singular being, who had caused her unaccountable emotion, addressed the court in his sharp, ringing voice, pronounced as if the sound of bell-metal:

"May it please your honor, I will assume the task of defending the lady."

"What?" exclaimed the judge, "are you a licensed attorney?"

"That question is irrelevant and immaterial," said the stranger with a venomous sneer, "as the recent statute entitles any person to act as counsel at the request of a party."

"But does the prisoner request it?" inquired the judge.

"Let her speak for herself."

"I do," was the answer, as a long drawn sigh escaped, that seemed to rend her very heart strings.

The case immediately progressed, and as it had a tinge of romantic mystery, we will epitomize the substance of the evidence. About twelve months before, the defendant had arrived in the village and opened an establishment of millinery—

Residing in a room connecting with her shop, and all alone, she prepared the articles of her trade with unwearied labor and consummate taste. Her habits were secluded, modest and retiring, and hence she might have hoped to avoid notoriety, but for the perilsous gift of that extraordinary beauty, which too often, and to the poor and friendless always, proves a curse. She was soon sought after by all these glittering fire-flies of passion, the profusion of whose life, everywhere, is seduction and ruin. But the beautiful stranger rejected them all with unutterable scorn and loathing. Among these rejected admirers was one of a character for which the fair milliner had everything to fear. Hiram Shore belonged to a family at once opulent, influential and distinguished. He was him of ill-concealed, brave, and frolicsome revengeful—the most famous duelist in the South-West. It was generally known that he had made advances to win the favor of the lovely Emma—and had shared the fate of all other wooers—a dislaidful repulse.

At nine o'clock on Christmas night, 1837, the people of Lewisburg were startled by a loud scream, as of one in mortal terror; while following that, with scarcely an interval, came successive reports of fire arms, one—two—three—a dozen deafening roars. They flew to the shop of the milliner, from whence the sounds proceeded, and pushed back the unfastened door, and a scene of horror was presented. There she stood in the centre of the room, with a revolver in each hand, every barrel discharged, her features pale, her eyes flashing wildly, but her lips parted with a fearful smile. And there at her feet, weltering in his warm blood, his bosom literally riddled with bullets, lay the all-dreaded duelist, Hiram Shore, gasping in the last agony. Before he died, he articulated but a single sentence:

"Tell my mother I am dead and gone to hell!"

"In the name of God who did this?" exclaimed the appalled spectators.

"I did it," said the beautiful milliner; "I did it to save my honor."

As may be readily imagined, the deed caused intense excitement. Public opinion, however, was divided. The poorer class crediting the girl's version of the facts, lauded her heroism in terms of measureless eulogy. But the friends of the deceased, and of his wealthy family, gave a different and darker color to the affair, and denounced the lovely homicide as an atrocious criminal. Unfortunately for her, the officers of the law, especially the judge and the sheriff, were devoted comrades of the slain, and displayed their feelings in a revolting partiality. The judge committed her without the privilege of bail, and the sheriff chained her in the felon's dungeon. Such is a brief abstract of the circumstances developed in the examination of witnesses. The testimony closed, and the pleading began.

First of all, three advocates spoke in succession for the prosecution; but neither their names nor their arguments are worth preserving. Orators of the blood and thunder genus, they about equally partitioned their howling eloquence between the prisoner and her leather-robed counsel, as if in doubt which of the twin was then on trial. As for the stranger, he seemed not to pay the slightest attention to his opponents, but remained motionless, with his forehead bowed on his hands, like one buried in deep thought or slumber.

When the proper time came, however, he suddenly sprung to his feet, crossed the bar, and took his position almost touching the jury. He then commenced in a whisper, but it was a whisper so wild, so clear, so mutterably ringing and distinct, as to fill the hall from floor to galleries. At the outset, he dwelt in pure logic, separating and combining the proven facts, till the whole mass of confused evidence looked transparent as a globe of glass, through which the innocence of the client shone brilliant as a sunbeam; and the jurors nodded to each other signs of thorough conviction; that thrilling whisper, and fixed concentration, and the language, simple as a child's, had convinced all.

He then changed his posture, so as to sweep the bar with his glance, and began to tear and rend his legal adversaries. His sallow face glowed like a heated furnace, his eyes resembled living coals, and his voice became the clangor of the trumpet. I have never, before or since, listened to such murderous denunciations. It was like Jove's eagle charging a flock of crows; it was like himself, hurling red-hot thunder bolts among the quaking ranks of a conspiracy of inferior gods. And yet, in the highest temper of his fury, he seemed calm; he employed no gesture save one—the flash of a long, boy-finger, direct in the eyes of his foe. He painted their venality and unmanly meanness, in cold-blood for money to hunt down a poor, friendless woman, till a shout of stifled rage arose from the multitude, and even some of the jury cried "shame."

He changed his theme once more. His voice grew mournful as a funeral song, and

his eyes filled with tears, as he traced a vivid picture of man's cruelties and woman's wrongs, with particular illustrations in the case of his client, till one half the audience wept like children. But it was in the peroration that his zenith at once of terror and sublimity. His features were as livid as those of a corpse; his very hair seemed to stand on end; his nerves shook as with a palsy; he tossed his hands wildly towards heaven, each finger stretched apart and quivering like the flame of a candle, as he closed with the last words of the deceased, Hiram Shore—

"Tell my mother, I am dead and gone to hell!"

His emphasis on the word hell embodied an ideal of all horror; it was a wail of immeasurable despair. No language can depict the effect on us who heard it. Men groaned, women screamed, and one poor mother fainted, and was borne away in convulsions. The whole space occupied but an hour.

The jury rendered a verdict of "NOT GUILTY," without leaving the bar, and three cheers, like successive roars of an earthquake, shook the court house from floor to corner stone.

After the adjournment, which occurred some, the triumphant advocate arose and gave out an appointment—

"I will preach in this hall to night at 8 o'clock."

He then glided off through the crowd, speaking to no one, though many attempted to draw him into a conversation.

At eight o'clock the court-house was again thronged, and the stranger, according to promise, delivered a sermon. It evinced the same attributes as his previous eloquence of the bar; the same compact logic, the same burning vehemence, and increased bitterness of denunciation. Indeed, misanthropy revealed itself as the prominent emotion. The discourse was a tirade against infidels, in which class the preacher seemed to include everybody but himself; it was a picture of hell, such as Lucifer might have drawn, with a world in flames for his pencil. But one paragraph pointed to heaven, and that only demonstrated the utter impossibility that any human being could ever get there.

A sermon that did not suit.

Mrs. H— was a very religious woman, and perhaps came at her worshiping place, N—, her favorite minister, as some of our people do Kossuth, the Hungarian; but he was that as my, she was continually hammering Aaron, a shrewd lad of some sixteen years of age, who, to the old lady, and, hear her scold, would occasionally speak rather lightly of Mrs. H— her minister.

Happening at the house of Mrs. H— one day, the old lady began as usual to chide him, and Aaron, thinking she put it on rather hard, after hearing her through, said—

"I am as good as Mr. N—, and can preach as well."

"Preach!" said the old lady, "you don't know one single word in the Bible."

"Well, give me a text," said Aaron, "and see if I can't preach."

"You don't know anything about the Bible," said Mrs. H— "If you do, you may take any text you please."

"Well," said Aaron, "A virtuous woman is without price—ain't that in your Bible?"

"Yes," said Mrs. H— "and it shows that women are better than men, for the Bible don't say a virtuous man is without price."

"Well, we will see about that," said Aaron, and after dividing his sermon into two or three heads, he commenced as follows:

"The scarcity of an article, in all cases, governs the price, but when an article can not be found, it cannot be had at any price, and for that reason, it is 'without price.'—Now, if there were any virtuous women, there would be a price, a high one, too, by reason of their scarcity, but as there are none—"

At this stage of the discourse, the old lady seized the broom—

"Aaron, you are an impudent brat, and if you don't clear out I will pelt you with the broom handle."

Aaron made tracks into the road, finishing his sentence, "they are without price," as he went through the door, which the old lady closed after him with considerable force.

Aaron now started from home, saying to himself as he went along:

"I guess the old woman will not chastise me again very soon."

It proved subsequently that he was not mistaken in his predictions.—Continued.

SIMPPLICITY.—A neighbor of ours not long since introduced to his son about six years of age, a little brother who had just arrived in the world, which all agree in abusing, but none like to part with even in exchange for a better. The boy looked at his infant brother in some little perplexity, and then raising his eyes to his father inquired, "Where did you get it?" "Bot it my son," said the father with laudible gravity. Again the boy looked at the baby, and after a short time asked, "Why didn't you get a white one father?"—Knickerbocker.

AN "EX-OFFICIO CASE."—One of the honest "fanny-men" from the rural districts was explaining to a grave disciple of Coke and Littleton the merits of a case in litigation, and in which the rural defendant was a party. The man of law, in the age and reflective manner peculiar to the profession, remarked that it appeared to him to be a *prima facie* case. "*Prima facie* case," ejaculated his earnest client; "is an *ex-officio* case, I should think."

A Live Yankee.

Professor Anderson was looking over the American and foreign newspapers, in the office of the New York Dutchman, when he saw that he was closely scrutinized by a gentleman of tall stature, and swarthy complexion, and who was evidently from the country. The following conversation took place:

"I say, you are Professor Anderson, hey?"

"Yes, sir."

"Wal, you are a tarpon smart man, I hear. You haven't got the bottle with you, have you?"

"No, sir."

"Wal, I'm from down East, hev been raised in Maine, and should like to purchase a duplicate of that bottle, as I am going out stumpin' for—"

"I guess I had your bottle, or its twin brother, I'd soon swap the Scotch without talking politics either."

"I never carry my bottle with me, nor have I a duplicate of it."

"Sorry for that, sir," said the stumpin'.

"However," he continued, "I was once taught a trick when a boy, but I almost forgot how the thing is done. I'll tell you how it was done, stranger, as near as I can. I used to take a red cent and change it into a ten dollar gold piece."

"Oh," said the Professor, smiling, "that is quite simple a mere sleight of hand trick."

"I know it's not very difficult, but as I forgot how, will you show me?" at the same time handing a copper to the wizard.

"Oh, yes, sir, if you will, I will show you in a moment. Hold your hand," said the wizard. "This is your cent, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you sure that you have it?" said the wizard.

"I guess I have," said he, and he'll be a dollar you can change it into a ten dollar gold piece."

"Done," said the wizard; "now, hold fast!"

"Yes, sir, I reckon I will—but stay! down with your dollar! here's mine," said the Yankee.

The wizard covered the Yankee's dollar.

"Now, sir, open your hand."

He did so, and to the wizard's astonishment he held a bona fide ten dollar gold piece!

"Well, sir," said the wizard, "you see you have lost the dollar."

"I guess I have," said he, handing over the two dollars.

"Now," said the Professor, "I'll bet you another dollar. I will change the ten-dollar gold piece into your cent again much quicker."

"You don't said the cent from Maine, placing the money in his pocket, and buttoning it up tight. "I'm much obliged to you, Professor, but I reckon I'll leave it to you. Good morning, old hoss," said he, walking out of the office, and turning around as he reached the door, he placed his right hand on the door, and his left hand on his forehead, and he said, "I'm much obliged to you, Professor, but I reckon I'll leave it to you. Good morning, old hoss," said he, walking out of the office, and turning around as he reached the door, he placed his right hand on the door, and his left hand on his forehead, and he said, "I'm much obliged to you, Professor, but I reckon I'll leave it to you. Good morning, old hoss," said he, walking out of the office, and turning around as he reached the door, he placed his right hand on the door, and his left hand on his forehead, and he said, "I'm much obliged to you, Professor, but I reckon I'll leave it to you. 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