County Clerk's Office

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POETRY.

SEA-REVERIE.

BY FATHER RYAN.

Strange Sea! why is it that you never rest?
And tell me why you never go to sleep.
Thou art like one so sad and sin oppressed—
(And the waves are the tears you weep)—
And thou didst never sin;—what ails the sinless deep?

To-night I hear you crying on the beach,
Like a weary child on its mother's breast,
A cry with an infinite and lonesome reach
Of unutterable deep unrest;
And thou didst never sin; why art thou so distressed?

But ah, sad sea! the mother's breast is warm,
Where crieth the lone and the wearied child;
And soft the arms that shield her own from harm;
But to-night, oh, sea! thy cry is wild—so wild!
What ails thee, Sea! the midnight stars are bright,
How safe they lean on Heaven's sinless breast!
Oh, Sea! is the beach too hard, tho' e'er so white
To give thy utter weariness a rest?
(And to-night the winds are a-coming from the West)—

. . . . . .

Where the shadows moan o'er the day's life done,
And the Darkness is awaiting for the Light.
Ah, me! how the Shadows ever seek and shun
The sacred, radiant faces of the Bright!
(And the stars are the Vestal-virgins of the Night.)

Or am I dreaming? Do I see and hear
Without me what I feel within?
Is there an inner eye and an inner ear
Thro' which the sounds and silences float in
In reflex of the spirits calm o'ertroubloss din?

I know not. After all what do I know?
Save only this—and that is mystery—
Like the sea, my spirit hath its ebb and flow
In unison, and the tides of the sea
Ever reflect the ceaseless tides of thoughts in me.

Waves! are ye priests in surplices of gray
Fringed by the fingers of the breeze with white?
Is the beach your altar where ye come to pray
With the sea's Ritual every day and night?
And the suns and stars your only altar-light.

Great Sea! the very rhythm of my song—
(And the winds are a-coming from the West,)
Like thy waves, moveth uncertainly along,
And my thoughts, like thy tide with a snow-white crest,
Flow and ebb—ebb and flow with thy own unrest.

BILOXI, MISS., November 16, 1881.

MRS. SYMINGTON'S BARGAIN.

All women we are told have their weaknesses, and Mrs. Stanhope Symington was a china maniac, as are most people to some degree in this æsthetic nineteenth century of the world. But Mrs. Symington excelled in the matter. She would prowl in second-hand stores, penetrate into the cavernous recesses of tenement houses, drive long distances into the country to old homesteads where she had heard vague rumors concerning "flaring blue," "old green glaze," "butterfly yellow" and "genuine old India wares." She would remorselessly turn the choicest pieces of modern bric-a-brac from her tables to make way for spoutless tea pots, cracked bowls and noseless jugs. She crowded her drawing-room with brackets, shelves and cabinets for the accommodation of of ancient plates, which she called "plaques," and pitchers, which she rechristened "vases."

Mr. Symington, a meek little man with limp yellow-white hair, a flat nose and colorless eyes like dim glass marbles, began to find it no slight task to make his way through his own house without breakage or misfortune.

"I wish there was not such a thing as old china in the world," he lamented upon one particular occasion, after he had knocked a handleless cup from a tripod draped in olive velvet.

"Stanhope," reproved his wife, not without severity, "would you retard the progress of modern civilization? This cup, fragile as it may seem, represents an era in decorative history."

"Well, it won't represent it much longer," observed Mr. Symington, as he gathered up the fragments with something very like vindictiveness in his faded eyes.

"But, Stanhope," cried his wife, "what are you going to do with those pieces?"

"Throw 'em into the ash barrel, of course," said Mr. Stanhope, spiritlessly.

But Mrs. Symington rescued them from his grasp with a shriek of apprehension.

"Are you mad, my dear?" she ejaculated. "I can mend them with a little cement and a great deal of time; and even then I wouldn't take twenty dollars for this exquisite cup. And I have been thinking, Stanhope—"

"Well, my dear," said the luckless iconoclast, looking dolefully at his finger which had been cut with one of the pieces of broken crockery, "what have you been thinking?"

"That I should like to go up into Maine next week," said the lady, insinuatingly.

"Into Maine? In midwinter?" echoed her amazed spouse, opening the dim eyes very wide indeed.

"To see Aunt Grizzel," explained Mrs. Symington—"my Aunt Grizzel Grumpton, you know, at Wild River."

"Humph!" remarked Mr. Symington, bandaging his finger with his pocket handkerchief. "I didn't know that you cared so very particularly about your Aunt Grizzel."

"My dear," said Mrs. Symington, merging her speech into a mysterious whisper, "I've just remembered, all of a sudden as it were, that she has a set of very old flaring blue china. She must have. It belonging to her mother before her; and how I've forgotten it all these years I'm sure I can't imagine.—Even now I shouldn't have recalled it to my memory, I suppose, if I hadn't chanced to see, at Mrs. Hepburn's afternoon tea yesterday, the darlingest little egg-shell cups, with bridges and pagodas and willow trees all over 'em, exactly such as Aunt Grizzel's mother used to have. Then it came to me like a flash of lightning—Aunt Grizzel's china!"

"Probably it's all broken by this time," gloomily suggested her husband.

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Symington, briskly. "Aunt Grizzy never broke anything in her life. She is carefulness itself; and up there in Maine, you know, they don't have clumsy waitresses to fling things about. No, no; you may depend that she has it all safe and sound in one of those odd little three-cornered cupboards of hers. A treasure, Stanhope, a perfect treasure. Money would not buy such a set as that; a hundred years old, if it's a day. So, if you won't mind, my dear, I'll just run up to Maine, and see about it."

"Do as you please, Arabella," said Mr. Symington, resignedly. He knew that Mrs. Symington generally did as she pleased, and he saw no especial advantage in debating the question.

"Thank, dear; so kind of you?" uttered Mrs. Symington. "And of course I can't go to the polar regions entirely unprotected, so I'll order one of those comfortable seal dolmans that everybody is wearing now, and a new plush hat with a cluster of ostrich tips. One must go dressed like other people; and if you can give me twenty-five or thirty dollars I dare say Aunt Grizzy will let me have the set for that (she don't know the value of old china, poor thing!) and the journey won't be more than thirty dollars both ways, if I go by sea, including a stateroom."

"It appears to me," said Mr. Symington, discouragingly, "that this is a good deal of a wild goose chase, going dancing up to the northern boundaries of Maine at this time of year for an old set of trumpery china which probably didn't cost ten dollars to start with."

"Oh, Stanhope, it did!" cried the lady, indignantly. "It was real India ware, imported, without paying a dollar of duty, by an old sea captain in the India trade, expressly for my grand-mother Grumpton. And besides you are so groveling and prosiac in your ideas. As if the original cost of a thing of this nature signifies! It's the æsthetic value that we look at, don't you see?"

"Ah!" said Mr. Symington. "Well, if you must go, you must go, I suppose; and of course I shall have to give you a check for what money you are likely to want."

And Mr. Symington sighed deeply and went upstairs to get a piece of court-plaster for his cut finger.

Mrs. Symington went to Wild River, in the northern boundaries of Maine, where the pine forests were thatched with snow, and the icicles tinkled in the woods of a moonlight night like so many castanets gone mad. She made the greater part of the voyage by sea, and was consequently very seasick, for the water was rough and the gale tempestuous.

"I will come back by land," she said to herself, as she sat in the little hotel at Portland, and viewed her green and yellow complexion with a shudder.—"Money wouldn't induce me to risk my life again in that horrid steamer, where one is buffeted and seesawed about on waves that are as high as a house. The palace car fare will be something of an extra expense, and I shall lose my return ticket by steamer, but I'm sure Mr. Symington won't grudge it to me when he hears how I've been pitched and tumbled about on the ocean in peril of my life."

And she put on her black brocaded silk, her new plumed hat, and the seal dolman, and took the northward-bound train, resolved to present an imposing appearance to Aunt Grizzy Grumpton when she should reach Wild River station.

It was very cold—a dull, bitter, leaden cold—with the ground frozen like rock, the streams bound in ice, the sky gray and bitter, with an ineffable gloom.—Aunt Grizzel Grumpton lived in a little one storied house on the top of an un compromising hill, where a solitary cedar tree was twisted around like a corkscrew with the force of the east wind, and the few lean sheep huddled behind the rocks in shivering groups, picturesque, but far from comfortable. And even after they had come in sight of the old building whose one coat of red paint had long ago been worn away by the suns and rains of well-nigh a century, Mrs. Symington had serious doubts whether the one-horse sleigh in which she was jerked and jolted up the incline would not be blown sheer away by the rush of the tempest before they could reach their destination.

However, it wasn't. And once in Aunt Grizzy's cottage things were very comfortable. There was no wide throated chimney, filled with moss-fringed logs, such as the fancy of city dwellers is apt to depict in the solitary farm house. People in Maine know better than that. But there was an immense cook stove, which heated the room to an atmosphere of eighty-odd degrees; the cracks in the window sashes were pasted over with brown paper, and sand bags were laid on the top ledges, while a doubled rag carpet covered the floor, and a wood-box, heaped to the very top, stood in the angle of the chimney piece. Aunt Grizzy's dress was of blue home-spun flannel, and she wore a worsted hood pulled over her ears, and a little plaid shawl folded over her breast, and she was addicted to the use of snuff, and said "Hep?" whenever any one addressed her.

"My cheeny?" said Aunt Grizzy.—"Well, I'm free to own that I think a deal of that cheeny. But I don't know, Niece Arabella, how you came to hear of it."

"It is an heirloom in our family, Aunt Grizzel," said Mrs Symington, exerting herself to speak loudly.

"Hey?" said Aunt Grizzy, with her hand placed sounding-board fashion behind her ear.

"Every one must have heard of it," said Mrs. Symington, at the risk of breaking a blood vessel in her throat.

Aunt Grizzy's wrinkled face fairly beamed. "Well, I calculate it ain't absolutely ugly," said she. "But still, if you've really set your heart on it, Niece Arabella—But it ain't unpacked, I always put it away this time of year when there ain't no tea parties given."

"Oh, never mind that," said Mrs. Symington, her heart leaping within her at this easy conquest of the fort. "It will be all the more convenient for me to carry it. People always keep such treasures put away in secret places."

"Hey?" said Aunt Grizzy, and Mrs. Symington repeated her words.

"Oh, there ain't no secret about it!" said Aunt Grizzy, as she turned the hissing sausages in the pan. "Only I hain't had time to overhaul it since you've been here."

"Naturally?" interrupted Mrs. Symington. "But I suppose it is all in good condition?"

"Sartinly, sartinly," said Aunt Grizzy. "You can look at it if yourself if you like, Niece Arabella."

"Oh, that is not at all necessary," said Mrs. Symington. "But now as to the price, Aunt Grizzy?"

"I ain't one to haggle with my relations," said Aunt Grizzy, giving the frying pan a shake over the blazing sticks. "Set your own price, Arabella, and if I don't like it I'll make bold to say so."

"Do you think, Aunt Grizzy," hesitated the city lady, "that twenty-five dollars would be a reasonable compensation for it?"

"Well, yes," said Aunt Grizzy. "It never cost me that, because—"

"No, of course not," hurriedly interpssed Mrs. Symington, and she produced the twenty-five dollars, all in gold half eagles, with the exultant feeling of one who has picked a precious diamond out of the dust. "But I should wish you to feel that I had dealt fairly with you in a matter like this."

"Well, I hain't no reason to complain," said Aunt Grizzy. "Some folks fancies cheeny. I don't. A plate's a plate to me, and a cup's a cup, and you are kindly welcome to my set if you've took a notion to it."

Mrs. Symington went home the next day, through a whirlwind of snow, having been fed upon pork and sausages, sausages and pork, at every meal since her arrival, and retaining a very vivid recollection of the Maine winds and tempests.

"I don't think I'd go back there again, even for a set of old china," said Mrs. Symington, as she seated herself on the velvet cushions of the palace-car and shrank shiveringly inside of her seal dolman and fleece-lined fur gloves.—"Aunt Grizzel will never die a natural death; she'll be blown away, like Mother Hubbard."

But all these petty tribulation were forgotten as a thing out of mind on the brilliant January morning on which, in front of the sea-coal fire in her own cozy drawing-room, she unpacked the coarse wooden box wherein were concealed the priceless treasures of Aunt Grizzy Grumpton's china.

"Don't touch them, Stanhope," said she, with a small shriek of dismay.—"Men are so dreadful careless. Oh, here they are on the top all wrapped in separate pieces of paper."

"Eh?" said Mr. Symington, standing by with a hammer and screw-driver brandished in either hand. "Are these—antiques?"

"Good gracious me!" gasped Mrs. Symington. "What can this possibly mean?"

For the china which she unwrapped from its coverings of coarse brown paper was a cheap and common style, such as is associated in the mind with tea chromos, gaudy lithographs and salesmen of the Hebraic persuasion—white, with a band of imitation gold around each piece, and a coarse flower sprawling below, as if it had been laid on with a miniature whitewash brush.

"This is never my Grandmother Grumpton's old china," said Mrs. Symington, bursting into tears, and pushing the hideous atrocities away with a force which cracked two plates. "I'll write to Aunt Grizzy at once, and this misunderstanding shall be cleared up."

In the course of time an answer came from Wild River, stiffly written in pale ink, and conveying in its taut ensemble the general impression that Aunt Grizzy had wrestled with it as if it had been a fit of the Asiatic cholera.

"Dear Niece" (it said).—"With Love and doty I take up my Pen to inform You that the China is all right Bo't from Snefly & Pipkin, in Boston, last November, at Eight ($8) the Set, to be transported at my own Dammage. As for my Mother's old Set, wirch Captain Babcock bro't from Calcutta in the Year 1796, I Gave it to his Neice Helen Hosmer two Yeres ago for a Pare of Gold Spectackles and a Fur Muff, being so Cracked and Old fashioned that it wasn't worth no more. But I am told that she puts it on Ebbony Shelves in her Best Parlor. But Helen never was more than Half-Witted, and your Set witch you took home with you is worth a Deal the most Monney. So you have the Best Bargain. With love, I remain, Your Aunt to Command,

"GRIZZEL GRUMPTON."

"Ah!" said Mr. Symington, who had been listening intently to the contents of this much blotted and besmeared piece of manuscript, sealed with Aunt Grizzy's thimble top, and still retaining a subtle odor of fried sausages and griddle cakes. "A seal dolman at three hundred dollars, a thirteen-dollar hat, a pair of fifteen-dollar fur gloves, a fifty-dollar journey and a twenty five-dollar investment, all for a set of china which you can buy anywhere on the Bowery Grand street for ten dollars! How does that look, my dear, as viewed in the light of political economy?"

And Mrs. Symington answered only by her tears.

"There, there, Bella, don't fret," said her husband, kindly. "Let the thing go for what it is worth. Forget it."

"But I can't help f-f-fretting," sobbed Mrs. Symington. "One thing is quite certain, however—I never will be such a fool again. I will not spend another cent for ceramics until I have economized enough to pay for this outrageous swindle."

"Gently, my dear, gently," said her husband. "Now you are going too far. Aunt Grizzel was honest enough. You said you wanted her china, and she sold you her china at your own terms."

"But I didn't mean this china," said Mrs Symington.

"How was she to know what you meant?" said Mr. Symington. "China is china, and to me one piece is as good as another."

And Mrs. Symington was too broken down and spiritless even to argue the point with him.—*Bazar.*

For the SPECTATOR.

NEW YORK LETTER.

THE CIRCUS—THE GRAND MAY FESTIVAL—PATTI—EASTER CARDS—CONFEDERATE HALF DOLLAR—SOCIETY GOSSIP—INTERESTING FAN EXHIBITION—A NEW ROSE—ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

NEW YORK, March 20th.—Some enthusiast on circuses remarked during the past week that they were a public blessing. Why, I do not know, except that they bring together all classes of society. On Monday night, P. T. Barnum's great show, truly the greatest on earth, was opened at the Madison Square Garden. There were present fully eight thousand people, representatives of every class of our society. General Grant was present and fairly roared at the antics of the baby elephant and the clown, who was unusually amusing. Roscoe Conkling was also present, and the venerable General Sickles, whose eccentric wedding attracted so much amusement and such widespread comment some months ago, paraded around the four sides of the immense building with a smile of great satisfaction illuminating his countenance. Indeed, everybody who could spare the time, the money, or was happily released from a previous engagement, was there. It was a singular spectacle, one not to be witnessed in any other city in the universe. Any number of emigrants were also present in their picturesque costumes, and no matter whether they spoke as many different dialects as the people who got confused at the Tower of Babel, they could see and comprehend what was going on, and could, therefore, enjoy it. This, I believe, has always been the secret of the success of a circus. The eye takes it all in and the mind is satisfied; for the eye is tutor to the soul. If it is pleased, the spirit grows glad, and nobody in all this world understands this better than P. T. Barnum. Before I leave this circus, though, I must tell you what a gorgeous—yes, absolutely gorgeous—parade occurred on Saturday evening through Broadway and our principal streets. There were in the parade horses, elephants, zebras, camels, brass bands, heralds, mounted women and mounted men; tiger, lion, leopard, white bear, and sea-lion dens; chimes, chariots, cages, Santa Claus; the old woman show, tableaux, the small rhinoceros, hippopotamus and giraffe cages, the calliope and the polar bear. Calcium lights were illuminating the wagons, cages, chariots, animals and men, and there were a thousand of red, yellow, green, and blue torch-lights. From up town, down town, from Brooklyn, Jersey and suburban towns, throngs flocked to see the brilliant spectacle as it passed triumphantly by. The prancing horses, the chimes sounding loud above the hoarse cries of the drivers, the shrill calliope, the woman seated high above the crowd on the golden chariot, the awkward elephants, the music of the numerous bands and the roaming of the wild beasts in their open dens provoked in turn the enthusiasm of the spectators.

Great and grand are the preparations now going on for the May Musical Festival, which will be given at the immense armory of the Seventh Regiment under the direction of Theodore Thomas. In consequence of the great space required for the chorus and orchestra only 7,000 seats can be disposed of. The choral forces will include the Brooklyn Philharmonic Chorus, the Cecilian Society of Philadelphia, the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, and will aggregate about three thousand five hundred voices. The orchestra will include three hundred performers. Campanini, Miss Annie Louise Carey, Mr. George Henschel, Mrs. E. Aline Osgood, Herr William Candidus, and Miss Emily Winant are the soloists engaged. The affair promises to even excel in brilliancy the great festival of last year.

Speaking of music reminds me of Patti—Patti the Diva—the divinest of all warblers, who has been singing (and successfully too) in opera here for the last two weeks. She is simply perfect on the stage, so beautiful and graceful. And then her singing! Well, words cannot describe the exquisite qualities of her voice, its limpid, melodious tone, its passionate sweetness, its marvelous flexibility and delightful purity. A thrill of sensitive pleasure fills the soul on hearing the divinely tuned voice. Patti sails for Europe early in May, and although she has not been so overwhelmingly successful in this country, I think she will return home well pleased with her reception here, and the amount of money she has made.

In the show-windows of our stationery stores beautiful Easter cards have made their appearance. Some of the designs are very attractive. One card called "The New Jerusalem," is considered a gem. It consists of a cushion of card, doubly fringed with blue and white silk, the blue lying above the white. Then comes a frame of light blue watered silk, an inch wide, quilted in rosettes, and edged with a finished silk cord, forming a Roman cross at each corner above the blue silk quilting. The above embellishments surround a panel nearly three-quarters of a foot square, on which is a colored engraving of Thomas Moran's painting, "The New Jerusalem." The holy city is shown emerging from the azure realms of space, apparently on the bank of a silvery river, in which giant lilies are dimly outlined. The gates of jasper and the walls of gold reflect back a thousand-fold the rays of a majestic sun which forms the background to the picture. The foreground is grouped with cherubim, and on the left is God's angel, with outspread wings, descending earthward, holding in her hand a staff jeweled with the passion flower bearing the glad tidings to the earth: "And I beheld the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven"—Rev., xxi, 2. The practice of sending Christmas, Easter, New Year's, and birthday cards, has grown to be so popular and fashionable that importers and manufacturers and dealers in these goods are now actively engaged nine months in the year. One cause of this activity is the marked artistic improvements seen in the decorations. Of course, the trade has been benefitted by the æsthetic movement, and the card mania is but a fraction of the prevailing decorative fashion.

Here is an item which will perhaps interest somebody! A silver half dollar of the Confederate States, issued in 1861, was sold at auction on Monday at Clinton Hall, this city, for $870! The coin is in size like the United States half dollars, and, like them, has on the reverse side a figure of liberty. A wreath of sugar cane and cotton branches partially surround the shield. The wording is: "Confederate States of America. Half Dol." There were only three of these coins minted, I believe. This one was taken by Dr. B. F. Taylor chief coiner of the Confederate States. Jefferson Davis had one, but it was taken from him at the time he was captured. It has in some way disappeared, as has also the second one. This one belonged to John W. Scott. The next highest price paid for a single piece was $100 for a peculiar coin known as the "Sommer Islands sixpence," a copper coin which gives evidence of having been plated.

Before we have got half way through Lent the attitude of society people reminds one of the terrific fight between Baron de Crac and the lion. The champion firmly awaited the moment of attack, and then deftly passing his stalwart arm down the throat of the noble beast, turned him completely inside out. It is worthy of notice that the chronicle ends with the following beautiful remark: "*Et le lion expira de mortification et de douleur.*" The lion in the path of the women who guide and adorn our society is, for the moment, dullness, and the poet was right who said: "Born of a goddess, Dullness never dies." They are, therefore, serving Lent as the much mortified king of beasts was served, and are already devising future splendors and means of making life glorious. One form of polite dissipation has come forward in the shape of what is known as the "Badminton Club." The members meet at a regimental armory and indulge in a sort of battledore and shuttlecock game, which is a capital hinge on which to hang exercise and pastime. The women and girls all appear in bright and picturesque dresses, making the effect fine. Enjoyable times are had.

The fourteenth anniversary of the Sorosis was celebrated at Delmonico's on Monday evening. A delightful time was had. At the annual election recently, the president, Mrs. D. G. Croly, ("Jennie June,") was re-elected for the eighth successive term. On the twenty-fifth of next month, the anniversary of the first president of the club, Alice Cary, will be celebrated by an evening entertainment at Delmonico's, at which Mrs. Mary Clemmer, of Washington, has been invited to give an address, and for which several leading women poets have promised original contributions. The existence of Sorosis and its quiet work, executed within its own borders, is a credit to all women, and is only possible through the cultivation of conscientiousness and loyalty one to another.

The latest craze among women of wealth and fashion here is moleskin coats. A prominent society woman has the largest and most perfect moleskin garment ever made. It is composed of twelve hundred skins and is valued at $5,000!

At a fashionable dinner party the other evening, given by a man to a number of his friends, champagne was heated and used as soup!

A large number of our belles and beaux have been staying during Lent at Atlantic City, which is now termed the "Spring watering place."

At a fashionable fancy dress ball recently given here, the costumes that attracted the most attention were a cock and a hen, worn by a bride and groom, who entered a room together. The cock wore a bright yellow coat, a jacket of white feathers, knee-breeches of fawn-brown feathers, silk stockings, black shoes, and a field marshal's hat, with a cock's crest in golden feathers. The hen was in white satin, covered with snowy white down feathers, a plush border, feather paniers made to resemble wings, and turned up as a train; she carried a tiny basket of golden eggs.

Quite a new departure has taken place in the matter of wearing jewelry. Those who possess unmounted precious stones now group them in various positions on the bodies of their evening dresses. The most tasteful mode of arranging them is in the form of flowers—as for instance, amethysts simulating branches of lilac, diamonds or pearls as field daisies, or diamond lilies with golden pistils. Some women prefer a more barbaric arrangement. They group their stones together without any especial design and regardless of color.

A very pretty and interesting exhibition of fans opened last Saturday at the rooms of the Society of Decorative Art. The collection is considered the largest and most complete that has ever been seen in this country. Two beautiful fans have been loaned by Mrs. General Grant. One, presented to her by the City of Mexico, is composed of silver filagree, and the sticks, which are artistically carved, took one person a whole year to complete. The other fan which Mrs. Grant has loaned is composed of palest green and white ivory, and was presented to her by the King of Siam. A very curious fan, known as the Venetian dagger, and dating as far back as the fifteenth century, is made of ivory with arabesque of gold and silver, and has concealed in it a sharp and dangerous dagger. Strange times those must have been when a woman was compelled to carry a dagger concealed in her fan to protect