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WINTER.

The spirit of Winter arose on the air, With shivering limbs all naked and bare!

From the Present.

THE REMEMBERED HOME.

BY LYDIA MARIA CHILD.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

A child lay sleeping by the sea-shore. The tide was coming in so fast, that the foam of the great waves already dashed near the feet of the sleeping one.

Whereat the sleeper awoke, and looked around him. The place was wild and lonely; but the red, round sun was rising up out of the ocean, and as the sea-nymphs danced up to meet him, the points of their diamond crowns glittered among the green billows.

"Where am I?" said the child. He rubbed his eyes, looked all around with wonder. "How came I here?" he said: "This is not my home!"

Suddenly, he heard soft, sweet voices, they came from above his head, and the caves of the rocks echoed them.

Then he remembered that he was a King's son, and had once lived in a glorious palace. How had he wandered thence? Had gipsies stolen him, as he slept in his golden cradle? Those soft, sweet voices sounded like old times.

"I heard them in my father's house," said he; "oh, I wish they would sing to me again."

In the simplicity of his little heart, he thought some one among the rocks sung in reply to the voices in the air. He crept into a cave, and asked, "Where is my home? Ye that sing here so sweetly the songs of my father's house, can ye tell me where is my home?"

The waves dashed loud against the rocks, but there was no other sound; only, as he ceased to speak, echo, with hollow tones, answered, "home."

"Where is my home?" he cried with passionate eagerness; and echo again answered, "home."

Afraid of the loneliness, and of the mocking sounds, the child crept out of the cave, and came into the morning sunshine.

He walked on and on, and it seemed to him as if the smooth, hard beach would have no end. The great waves, as they came tumbling and roaring to his feet, seemed to speak into his heart, with a deep loud voice, "home! home!"

Then the tears rolled down his cheeks; for he felt as if he were wandering alone in a strange place.

As he went along, crying bitterly he met a lame old woman, who said to him sharply, "well John, where have you been? A fine piece of work is this, for you to walk in your sleep, and so be whimpering by the sea-shore at break of day! I must tie you to the bedstead; and then all the walking you must do in your dreams."

"The boy looked timidly at her, as she took him by the hand; and he wondered within himself if she were the gipsy that had stolen him. Then he remembered the melodious voice, and the echoes, in the cave, and how the great thundering waves seemed to speak into his heart.

"Why don't you talk?" said the old woman; "I should think you would be glad to go home."

Gradually he forgot the voices in the air and the echoes in the cave, until it seemed to him as if he had always lived in the old woman's hut.

But, a long, long time after, it chanced that the cow rambled from her pasture, and John was sent to find her.

He wandered far, into a deep, thick wood; and there by the side of a running brook, in the midst of white shining birch stems, that stood thick around, like slender columns of silver, the old cow was lying on the grass, with her feet folded under her, peacefully chewing her cud.

The thoughtful lad looked at the moon, fast tending to the west; he looked at her image in the brook; and he listened to the deep silence of the woods. The same sweet voice, that he had heard before, seemed to come from the brook; and the notes they sang were like snatches of old and familiar tune. Again he remembered, but more dimly than before, that he had once lived in a glorious palace, full of light and music.

He stood leaning against a birch tree, and looked with earnest, thoughtful love at a pale evening primrose, which grew by the brink of a rivulet.

By degrees, the flower raised itself, and assumed the look of a tall and graceful girl, playfully dipping her feet in the water. Then the heart of the youth was right joyful! He sprang forward, exclaiming, "Oh, it is long long years since we parted. Do you remember how I tried to kiss your image in the great crystal mirror in my father's palace? And how provoked I was that ever, as I tried to kiss your image, I kissed myself? How glad I am to see you again! Will you lead me to our home?"

The tall primrose waved her yellow blossoms in the evening air, and made no answer. The youth stood amazed. Where had the maiden vanished? Whence did she come? What meant these recollections of a far-off home?

In the deep solitude around, it seemed as if all things tried to tell him if he could but understand their language.

Slowly and sadly, he returned to his hut, driving the cow before him.

The night was beautiful, but solemn; for all was dusky light, and star-stillness. The lone traveler gazed at the silent sky with earnest glances, and still his busy heart repeated the question, "Where is my home? Where is the beautiful maiden?"

It seemed as if the stars might tell him, if they would; but the stars passed into his heart and found no voice.

For a long, long time, he remembered this scene with strange distinctness. At early dawn, at evening twilight, in the deep woods, and by the sounding shore, he thought of those soft, sweet voices, and the beautiful maiden. His heart desired to hear and see them again, with inexpressible longings.

At last, after weary months, he met them thus: he rose before the sun, one bright May morning, and went forth to gather violets for the children, in the field before him he saw a beautiful child, with white garments and golden hair. He called to her, "little one, you will take cold in the damp grass!" But the child turned round laughing, and threw flowers at his head. As he came nearer to her, he perceived that she had thin transparent wings of lovely purple; and sometimes she went skimming along the grass, and sometimes she sailed round his head, tossing flowers in his face, singing,

"Follow, follow, follow me! Follow me by rock and tree! Ever toward the rising sun, Follow, follow, lonely one! Where thy home is thou shalt know— But long the path the journey slow. Follow, follow, follow me! Follow me by rock and tree! Ever toward the rising sun, Follow, follow, lonely one!"

Thus she went on singing and dancing, and sailing in the air. Sometimes she ran before him silently; but if he questioned her, she skimmed swiftly away, as if she were skating on ice; and he could only see the shining of her white garments among the trees in the distance. She would wait till he came near, and then begin to sing,

"Follow, follow, follow me! In this way she led him to the top of a high mountain, and then flew away far up into the sky, and so out of sight. The youth gazed upward till he could no longer see the waving of her garments, or the glittering of her wings. "Oh, would that I, too, could fly!" he exclaimed. He looked down upon the broad green fields and the winding river, that lay at his feet, like emeralds set in silver; and the world seemed more lonely than ever. He leaned his head upon his hand and sighed. Suddenly he heard a tuneful voice; and

it sang the same notes that puzzled him on the sea-shore. He turned quick round, and the beautiful maid of the primrose stood before him!

Blushing deeply, and trembling with delight, he rose and said, "A pleasant May morning to you, fair maiden! Tell me your name."

With modest and simple frankness, she replied, "Thanks for this friendly greeting. My name is Mary; and my father is Joseph the miller. You can see our mill, if you look where the brook goes rushing down the sides of the mountain."

"Now, this is passing strange," thought he; "did I not see this very girl rise out of a primrose, by the side of the birch brook? Is she not, moreover, the very one whose image I tried to kiss in my father's mirror? But he kept these thoughts to himself, fearing she would again disappear. He said aloud, "You are abroad early this morning, fair maiden."

She replied, "I came hither for a rare blue flower, that my little sister dearly loves. It grows only on the mountain top, as if it liked to live near the sky. See, my basket is nearly filled with flowers; but I have not found our favorite blue-eye yet."

The youth eagerly inquired of what flower she was in search; and never was he so pleased, as when he found a group of them nodding under the warm shelter of a rock. They rambled over the mountain, till the basket and the maiden's apron were filled with flowers; and then slowly they went down to the cottage by the mill.

The good mother came to the door, with clean white cap, and silken kerchief folded over her bosom. The youth saluted her respectfully, and she, with warm, friendly heart, asked him to come in and share their breakfast. As he ate of their fresh honey and cakes of sweet meal, it seemed as if he had known them for years.

"I do not remember the face of the old miller and his wife," said he within himself; "but as for that sweet Mary, with her large blue eyes and golden hair, I certainly saw her in my father's mirror."

From that day, he went very often to the mill by the mountain stream. And, as he and Mary stood arm in arm, watching the pure white foam, as it went tumbling and sprinkling over the wheels of the mill, or looking up, with large still thoughts, into the silent sky, he was often puzzled to know whether his companion was an earthly maiden, an angel, or a fairy. Her voice was so like the voices heard on the sea-shore; and she so often sang snatches of songs, that seemed like familiar music long forgotten. Still more remarkable was the deep expression of her gentle eyes, which he said looked like the tones of his father's voice. Then that marvellous vision of the primrose by the brook; and the fair child, with shining wings, who first guided him to his Mary. Even the blue flower he gathered on the mountain top perplexed him, like things seen in a dream. And though the beautiful girl assured him she was Mary the miller's daughter, she at times confessed that she, too, seemed to remember a far-off radiant home, and, in her dreams, heard voices singing,

"Ever toward the rising sun, Follow, follow, lonely one!"

Then, the maiden really seemed to have fairy gifts; for, in the darkest night and the cloudiest day, wheresoever the youth saw her, a warm and mellow gleam, like sunlight, shone all around her. Ever since he had known her, the stars seemed to look, like mild eyes, into his heart; and when he was thinking of her, things inanimate found a voice, and spoke to him of that far-off, glorious home. Once she plucked a rose, and gave it to him; and ever after, when the leaves were withered, whenever he looked at it, a smiling face came out from the centre, with gentle, earnest eyes, and golden hair, and, in soft sweet tones, said, "Remember Mary!"

They often talked together of these things; and one day the youth said, "What hinders us, dear Mary, that we do not set out on a pilgrimage in search of our lost home?"

With a smile, she answered, "Perhaps it will be our Father's will that I shall go before. If I do, will you not dream you hear my voice singing,

"Follow, follow, follow me!"

Her words made the youth sad in his heart. "I should never find the way, without you," he said; and as he clasped her hand, the warm tears fell on it.

Seven days after that, he went to see his Mary and the sorrowing mother told him the Angel of Death had been at the mill. Her darling one had gone to the spirit land.

When that fair body was laid in the ground, John covered the place with the blue mountain flowers; and there he sat

and wept. The good mother spoke words of comfort; but he heard her not. Swooning voices breathed in the evening air; but he rose and stamped on the ground, and tore his hair, and screamed, "Sing me these songs no longer! I have no home. They are all lies—lies that ye utter. Has Mary, not gone away forever, even as the vision of the primrose vanished into thin air? Find some other dreaming fool to listen to your song!"

A grievous and mourning sound was heard, and died away slowly—slowly, in the distance.

The youth rushed down from the mountain, and roamed solitarily by the sea-shore. Although it was broad sunshine, the sky looked dark, and there was no light upon the earth. The pleasant birds were gone; crows cawed in the air; and the wagons creaked more harshly, since Mary died.

All at once, a tall figure, with a brass trumpet in his hand, walked up and blew a loud blast in his ear.

"In the name of the Furies, what did you that for?" exclaimed the angry youth. "Pray excuse me, sir," replied the figure, bowing low, "you seem to be creeping along in a gloomy way here. Men say you are in search of a lost home. Just see what a wondrous balloon I'll prepare for you!"

He put his trumpet to the edge of the sea, and blowing strongly, a large beautiful bubble sailed upward.

"There's a travelling equipage!" exclaimed the trumpeter. "Spring on that, and you may ride to Jupiter, or Saturn, if you choose."

The youth jumped astride the bubble. It went bobbing higher, and higher, as the wind carried it; and if it seemed likely to fall, the stranger blew lustily on his trumpet, and sent it aloft again. It kept very near the earth; but the giddy youth thought he was high up in the blue; and he felt great contempt for the pigmies that walked on the ground.

By and bye, other figures came up beside him riding on bubbles. This irritated him, and he tried to kick them out of the way.

At last, up came a monkey riding on a bubble, fiddling with all his might; and the trumpeter blew stoutly to keep him aloft.

Then came a Chinese juggler, dancing on a bubble, and tossing about five ivory balls the while. The blasts from the brass trumpet came so thick and strong, that he and the monkey kept close alongside of the youth.

At this, he exclaimed sharply, "A pretty sight are you two, jiggling about on soap bubbles, in that ridiculous fashion! Is it possible you are such fools as to think you imitate me, sailing on a rainbow?"

"Is it a rainbow you call it, sir?" said the monkey, with a grin: "it's nothing on earth but a bubble!"

This made him so angry, that he tried to knock them both down; but the juggler hit him on the forehead with one of his ivory balls, and he tumbled down senseless on the beach.

When he came to himself, he was lying in a cave, on a bed of sea-weed. A beautiful fairy figure stood before him, with a garment of transparent silver gauze, through which her graceful form was visible. She held towards him a goblet of wine, and, twirling round like an opera dancer, began to sing;

"Follow me, follow me! To the caves of the sea, Where beauty is glowing, And bright wine is flowing Follow me, follow me, To the caves of the sea."

"I will follow thee to the end of the world, beautiful stranger!" exclaimed the youth.

He tried to rise, but he grew dizzy, and leaned against a rock to recover his strength. As he leaned a withered rose fell on his bosom. When he took it up, a lovely face, with golden locks, and sad earnest eyes, looked out from it, and said in low, plaintive tones, "Remember Mary!"

He kissed it devoutly, then turned to look at the gay, dancing stranger. But lo! her beautiful face was twisted into a resemblance of the monkey. She grinned, as she said, "It's nothing but a bubble!" and so, with awkward hope, went tumbling down on four feet into the hidden recesses of the cave.

The youth again kissed his precious rose. The mild, earnest eyes smiled upon him, and the lips said, "Why seek you not your Mary, and your home?"

The youth had remembered how Mary had repeated to him.

"Ever toward the rising sun, Follow, follow, lonely one!"

So he gathered his garments around him, and turned toward the East. But presently he heard a cracked, shrill voice behind him, calling, "halloo! halloo! there!"

Turning, he saw a thin, wrinkled old man with a sharp visage, and a tight little mouth. He stood in an enormously large nautilus shell, as big as a boat, and full of gold. He beckoned so earnestly, that the youth went back.

"Stranger, I want your help," said the little old man, in coaxing tones. "I know where are piles and piles of gold like this. If you will help me get it, you shall have half of it; and that will make you richer than a king's son, I can tell you."

The youth was tempted by the offer, and promised to enter the old man's service.

A moaning sound, like sad wind-music, was heard in the distance; but it passed away, and he heeded it not.

He went to work with the old man; and they dug in dark caves, month after month, and year after year. He had scarcely time to glance at the bright heavens and the flowery earth. His withered rose lay neglected in his chest, and all recollections of his home had passed away.

His chief amusement was to pile up golden coins. He said to himself, "When I have a hundred thousand piles, each six feet high, I will build a palace of ivory, and all the floors shall be of pearl, inlaid with gold doubloons. My twelve milk-white horses shall have harness of pure gold, covered with seed pearl. Oh, then I shall be perfectly happy!"

So he dug and heaped, and heaped and heaped, till he had piled up a hundred thousand pillars, each six feet high.

He of the brass trumpet blew loud blasts, proclaiming to all wayfarers that here dwelt a man richer than Croesus. All men touched their hats to him. Even the Chinese juggler laid his forehead to the ground as he passed.

But all at once the coins behaved in the oddest fashion. From many of them there suddenly grew out wings, so that they looked like golden beetles of a new and ungainly shape. They flew away, like a swarm of bees, and went skirling through the air, klip! klip! klip! klip! clikeety, clike!

Then the sharp-faced little old man, who first decoyed him into the boat, tittered and laughed to see folks run after the flying gold. The trumpeter laid down his trumpet; said he had a pain in his side; and should go into a consumption if he blew any more.

John resolved to lock up the rest of his coins, lest they, too, should fly away. But the piles all tumbled to ashes beneath his touch. The people round him all said they were certainly gold. He tried to believe them; but when he took up a coin, he saw nothing but ashes.

As he meditated on this, one of the flying pieces alighted on the table, and began to dance a rigadoun. It tumbled over and over, and presently sprang up in the form of a monkey, with a face like the wrinkled old man of the boat. He turned a somerset in the air, and then came up with a dollar on his nose, singing, with an ugly grin, "It's nothing on earth but a bubble!"

Provoked beyond endurance, he seized a large stick and would have killed the beast; but a venerable man, with silver-white hair and a bland countenance, held his arm, and said, "harm not the poor animal, but rather do him good."

John covered his face and wept, as he said, "All things are bubbles!" They told me I should be like a king's son, if I heaped up this accursed gold, that now gibes, and gibbers, and mocks at me!"

"And wast thou not a king's son in the beginning?" said the old man with solemn tenderness. "What could the caves of the earth add to wealth like thine?"

Then was the wanderer strangely moved, and his thoughts were perplexed within him; for there was something in that old man's clear, mild eye, that reminded him of his beloved Mary; and the blue flowers on the mountain top.

He said this persuadingly; and he that heard, again believed, and turned his face toward the East. "Shall I carry nothing with me?" he inquired. "Thy withered rose, and the gold thou gavest to thy enemy, replied the venerable guide.

Before they had proceeded far, the trumpeter and the old man in the boat hailed after them, and the siren of the cave sang her song.

But they kept bravely on, over toward the mountain in the East. The flowers grew thicker in their path, and sent up their fragrant breath, an offering of love. In the trees seemed to be a multitude of harps; and unseen hands played the old familiar tunes.

When they reached the top of the mountain, John turned to speak to that kind old man, with solemn, friendly voice; but the child with white raiment and shining wings stood before him. She carried in her arms long wreaths of the most beautiful flowers; and as she danced round and round him, she twined them playfully about his limbs, singing,

"Ever toward the rising sun, Follow, follow, lonely one, Loud sound the notes of lofty cheer, Be strong of heart—thy Home is near!"

But presently, when a broad river came across their path, the man steep shuddering back, saying the waters looked cold and deep, and he could not wade through them.

The child dipped her wreath in the water, and straightway a glorious rainbow spanned the river.

On the opposite side appeared Mary, with a rose upon her bosom, and a bright revolving star on her forehead. She too began to sing,

"Loud sound the notes of lofty cheer, Be strong of heart—thy Home is near!"

Then a bright smile lighted up the face of the wearied traveller. He folded his arms, and the shining child guided him across the rainbow with her wreath of flowers.

On the other side, stood a stately palace of gold and pearl; and when he entered he beheld the self-same crystal mirror, where he, in the far old time, had tried to kiss the image of his Mary.

The coins he had given his enemy changed to golden harps, and made heavenly music. The withered rose bloomed again in more glorious beauty, and the whole air was filled with its fragrant breath as it waved gracefully in the gentle breeze.

Then John fell on the neck of his beloved, and said, "We have found our Father's house. This is our Home."

Poverty. As poverty is the lowest, so it is the most impudent, of the whole family of vices. Pride is a gentlemanly failing, and sins sweetly and respectably. It smells of evil, and turning its varnished cheek to the sun, walks abroad in purple and fine linen. Nay, it rides in a coach and four, and in the hours of penitential castigation bolts itself in a pew of the best upholstery and a fit of humanity, lasting at least a couple of hours, calls itself a miserable sinner.—Hence, pride as its worst has its good graces. At all events it never offends that extraordinary abstraction, public decency—for though we hear much about it, it is, nevertheless, something as difficult to discover as a city police man. No; pride, being a vice that is well to do in the world, may be called respectable. Pride keeps a barouche! Drunkenness may or may not be respected according to its education, we mean the peculiar bottle it studies. For the drunkenness that ponders over champagne, is a very different vice to the drunkenness that takes libations from quaterners. Arrogance is also a vice that may have its laudation. It rarely consorts with beggars; but is at least among that suspicious class, the respectable. Covetousness and avarice are called vices; for our part, we have ever thought them among the noblest virtues. And, so, indeed, in their heart of hearts, do nine men out of ten think them. And this is what they do: they give them hard names, and then, to make amends for the seeming harshness, take them to their bosom; in the same way that a foolish mother, when she sees her baby doing all sorts of misdemeanors, cries, "You little wretch," and then catches the child in her arms, and covers it with kisses. There are a few other vices that may all of them be turned into passable virtues, it is found in good company. Last, cruelty and selfishness each and all of these may have a *praline*—another thrilling musical name—the long eel of biped thistle.

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