

St. Cloud Journal. Published Every Thursday, AT ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA. Office—Corner of Washington Avenue and St. Germain Street. W. B. MITCHELL, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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The St. Cloud Journal.

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ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA, THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 1875.

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LALAGE. I could not keep my secret Any longer to myself; I wrote it in a song-book, And hid it on the shelf; It lay there many a life day, 'Twas covered soon with dust; I gazed on my word-book, The light have rained in the breeze, My fond notions aching; I told it to the running brook, With many a lover's sigh; The gay waves laughed it down the stream, And sang it in the ocean.

THE OLD BRIDGE AT FLORENCE. Tullio Gaddi built me. I am old; Five centuries old. I plant my feet of stone Upon the Arno, as St. Michael's tower Was planted on the dragon. Fold by fold Brought me, as it straggles, I behold My glistening scales. Twice hath it overthrown My kindred and companions. Me alone I can remember when I was made. Were driven from Florence; longer still ago The final wars of Ghibelline and Guelph. Florence shrank at the Jew's cry: And when I think that Michael Angelo Hath leaped on me, I glory in myself. —Longfellow.

SIR GUY'S GOBLET. (CONCLUDED FROM LAST WEEK.) It was all so much more grand than I had expected, that I felt terribly nervous about walking in through that ponderous door, and facing the Pomfrets alone. But it had to be done; so I did it without a sign of the hesitation I felt. I know now that the entrance-hall is furnished more like a banquet-hall, with its buffets and huge tankards of silver and gold (rather different these from poor Guy's mug), its big leather couches and capacious chairs,—its grandly-pannelled oak walls, hung with shields, and adorned at regular intervals with life-size figures of men in armor,—and its floor luxuriously carpeted with Persian rugs, and tiger, and bear, and deer skins. I know all this now,—as I know myself, or better perhaps; but it was all lost upon me, as I hovered somewhere in the rear of the big Swiss who acted as porter, who went on and announced me to some one, who forthwith came out from a room and made me welcome.

Before any of my fears and short-comings can be accepted by the reader as natural, it must be fully understood that, though I was a town-bred girl, I had seen nothing of "society." I had lived a Bohemian life with my brother till he married, and after his marriage I had lived in absolute quiet with his wife; so now I had not a single precedent to go upon at the Towers,—nothing but my womanly instincts, and I feared that these might prove insufficient.

For example, I felt abject before Percival, as she, after having had my box unstrapped by a subordinate, proceeded to unpack it. I knew what it contained, and knew what she would think of what it contained, and wished I hadn't come to the Towers in a breath. Then I wished she would speak to me; and then I remembered that it was not her part to volunteer speech. And then I looked in the cheval-glass, and saw myself reflected at full length, and wished, askingly, that I was not so much more substantial-looking than that brilliant apparition in velvet and grobe who had met the other brilliant apparition at the station.

Presently some tea in a grayish-white cup and some shavings of bread and butter were brought to me,—a deep, fat arm-chair having been previously wheeled round to the fire, and a table placed beside it, by Percival. Then that oppressive person announced her intention of leaving me for an hour, till it was time to come back and dress for dinner, and I was left alone.

Alone at last!—and how very small I felt, to be sure, in that lofty room, whose corners were lost in shade, for all the wax-candles that were lavishly burning themselves away for my enlightenment on the mantel-piece and dressing-table. What a mantel-piece it was, too!—carved into a hundred quaint conceits and flowery fancies, in such rich-looking dark oak. As I sat there, tired, warm, and excited, I began to make out stories for the many ladies of the house of Pomfret who must have sat where I was sitting now, and warmed themselves in other days.

Those other days,—ah! how the romance of them grew upon and bewildered me as I sat lost in the depths of the arm-chair, looking round at the dressing-table that was so different from anything I had ever seen before—out of Wardour Street. No muslin covered its big curved oak legs,—no little fanciful arrangement of quilted ribbon and fluted lace ran round its border. It stood uncovered in its dark, hard beauty; for I knew it to have possessed that latter attribute, now that I am aware that Gibbon's imagination and hand both worked upon it. What a massive silver-framed old glass it was that stood upon it!—an unbecomingly glass, too, I remember, for all its grandeur,—a glass that made me look green when I stood before it, and that threw my nose into a queer line that feature never had from nature.

For I had to rouse myself from my deep, dreamy fancies, and stand to be dressed before that old glass at last. Percival came back, and I gathered my disordered mind together under her auspices, and sat myself down before my stately toilet altar to be dressed for my first Christmas evening in a country house.

I felt very much depressed when, the foundation of fine starched skirts and silk slips laid, Percival, the terrible old maid I had ever had to wait upon me, brought out my prize dress—a fleecy-thing, all cloudy white tulle and puffness, that Helen had taken special pains with. This had been designed as a sort of crowning glory,—a thing in which to appear at some great county ball,—a robe in which to be seen by the "Prince Charming" who was to be seen and conquered by me during my visit. And now Percival took it out for me to go down to dinner in. I spoke at last, suggesting mildly that "there was no company, was there?" "Only the company staying in the house,—about twenty," Percival replied, standing before me like a respectable Fate, with the tulle dress gathered up over her arm.

"Then I will wear black silk," I contrived to say, firmly. So at last I got dressed in that, with a great white gauze cloud over me called a scarf. And then my hour was come, and I went down as well as I could to the Pomfret's drawing-room.

I shall never forget the desire I had to say, "Please, don't!" when the before-mentioned gorgeous Swiss threw open the drawing-room door, and announced "Miss Dunbar." A shiver possessed me from head to foot, and something went wrong with a vein in the back of my head,—and the walls wriggled,—and the floor surged,—and the ceiling came swooping down!—and I found myself erect after it all, and shaking hands with an old gentleman, who was thin and gray, and had a very hooked nose.

He was my great-uncle, Sir Guy Pomfret. He did not say much to me, but what he did say was kindly meant and so kindly expressed. I found myself sitting down after a minute, looking up at him as he stood before me, questioning me as to my journey; and then I found myself answering him coherently enough, though a shy glance which I had given to the left nearly made my brain reel again.

There were several people in the room, but it was large, and they stood in detached groups, and so did not strike the eye at once. At first when I came in I was only conscious of light and shade. But by the time I had sat down and answered Sir Guy's questions I was capable of distinguishing forms. The little deformed lady was doing the honors vivaciously I gathered, and then to my left were a couple that I started forward to look more fully at,—the Fairy Queen and my handsome fellow-traveler!

What a fairy queen she looked now, to be sure! She absolutely glittered in her fair beauty and her crystalline white silk. She was playing with a big, white-feathered fan, and a bouquet of Christmas roses, and a scent-bottle, and a glove that was half on and half off, as I looked at her. And she stood opposite to her, gazing admiringly at all her coquetish efforts, smiling half cynically, half while,—a perfect type of the tawny-bearded, blue-eyed, well-grown young Englishman, looking in his severe black and narrow, tape-like tie a bit like a mute or a waiter (not the comic writers), but thoroughbred as he was,—the result of race and good society.

He was brought up to me soon, and introduced by the sprightly deformed lady (who was, I found, the same Rachel Pomfret who had written to me) as "your cousin Georgie." I shall drop the "Miss Dunbar," Guy Pomfret.

Then, as I half rose (not quite knowing what to do, fearing nervously that I should commit some solecism in manners whatever I did), and returned his bow, Miss Pomfret added,— "And now come across, and get known to another cousin, my dear," and before I knew what was happening, I was face to face with the Fairy Queen, who held out a slender, white, jewelled hand to me, and laughed and flashed out smiles, and made me feel very material indeed as she made herself momentarily more fascinating, when Miss Rachel had named her as "Ida Pomfret."

I have no very distinct recollection of what went on before or at dinner. I only know I heard my own name repeated several times, and many people came and said kind things to me for my "mother's sake." I gladly, gratefully acknowledged that it was for her sake, solely and wholly, that I was a favored guest in this grand old place.

But I had to rouse myself from my deep, dreamy fancies, and stand to be dressed before that old glass at last. Percival came back, and I gathered my disordered mind together under her auspices, and sat myself down before my stately toilet altar to be dressed for my first Christmas evening in a country house.

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