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The Poetry of Mathematics.

A chapter from Longfellow's "Kavanagh."

"I was thinking to-day," said Mr. Churchill, a few minutes afterwards, as he took some papers from a drawer scented with a quince, and arranged them on the study table, while his wife, as usual, seated herself opposite to him with her work in her hand,—"I was thinking to-day how dull and prosaic the study of mathematics is made in our school-books; as if the grand science of numbers had been discovered and perfected merely to further the purposes of trade."

"For my part," answered his wife, "I do not see how you can make mathematics poetical. There is no poetry in them."

"Ah, that is a very great mistake! There is something divine in the science of numbers.—Like God, it holds the sea in the hollow of its hand. It measures the earth; it weighs the stars; it illumines the universe; it is law, it is order, it is beauty. And yet we imagine—that is, most of us—that its highest end and culminating point is book-keeping by double entry. It is our way of teaching it that makes it so prosaic."

So saying, he rose, and went to one of his book-cases, from the shelf of which he took down a little old quarto volume, and laid it upon the table.

"Now here," he continued, "is a book of mathematics of quite a different stamp from ours."

"It looks very old. What is it?"

"It is the *Lilawati* of Bhascara Acharya, translated from the Sanscrit."

"It is a pretty name. Pray what does it mean?"

"*Lilawati* was the name of Bhascara's daughter; and the book was written to perpetuate it. Here is an account of the whole matter."

He then opened the volume, and read as follows:—

"It is said that the composing of *Lilawati* was occasioned by the following circumstance. *Lilawati* was the name of the author's daughter, concerning whom it appeared, from the qualities of the Ascendant at her birth, that she was destined to pass her life unmarried, and to remain without children. The father ascertained a lucky hour for contracting her in marriage that she might be firmly connected, and have children. It is said that, when that hour approached, he brought his daughter and his intended son near him. He left the hour-cup on the vessel of water, and kept in attendance a time-knowing astrologer, in order that, when the cup should subside in the water, those two precious jewels should be united. But as the intended arrangement was not according to destiny, it happened that the girl, from a curiosity natural to children, looked into the cup to observe the water coming in at the hole; when by chance a pearl separated from her bridal dress, fell into the cup, and, rolling down to the hole, stopped the influx of the water. So the astrologer waited in expectation of the promised hour. When the operation of the cup had thus been delayed beyond all moderate time, the father was in consternation, and examining, he found that a small pearl had stopped the course of the water, and the long expected hour was passed. In short, the father, thus disappointed, said to his unfortunate daughter, I will write a book of your name, which shall remain to the latest times,—for a good name is a second life, and the ground work of eternal existence."

As the school-master read, the eyes of his wife dilated and grew tender, and she said,—

"What a beautiful story! When did it happen?"

"Seven hundred years ago, among the Hindoos."

"Why not write a poem about it?"

"Because it is already a poem of itself,—one of those things, of which the simplest statement is best, and which lose by embellishment. The old Hindoo legend, known with age, would not please me so well if decked in gay colors, and hung round with the tinkling bells of rhyme. Now hear how the book begins."

Again he read,—

"Salutation to the elephant-headed Being who infuses joy in the minds of his worshippers, who delivers from every difficulty those that call upon him, and whose feet are revered by the gods!—Reverence to Ganessa, who is beautiful as the pure purple lotus, and around whose neck the black curling snake winds itself in playful fold."

"That sounds rather mystical," said his wife.

"Yes, the book begins with a salutation to the Hindoo deities, as the old Spanish Chronicles begin in the name of God, and the Holy Virgin. And now see how poetical some of the examples are."

He then turned over the leaves slowly and read,—

"One-third of a collection of beautiful water-lilies is offered to Mahadev, one-fifth to Hari, one-sixth to the Sun, one-fourth to Devi, and six which remain are presented to the spiritual teacher. Required the whole number of water-lilies."

"This is very pretty," said the wife, "and would put it into the boys' heads to bring you pond-lilies."

"Here is a prettier one still. One fifth of a

hive of bees flew to the Kadamba flower; one-third flew to the Silandhara; three times the difference of these two numbers flew to an arbor; and one bee continued flying about, attracted on each side by the fragrant Ketaki and the Malati. What was the number of the bees?"

"I am sure I should never be able to tell."

"Ten times the square root of a flock of geese—"

Here Mrs. Churchill laughed aloud but he continued very gravely,—

"Ten times the square root of a flock of geese, seeing the clouds collect, flew to the Manus lake, one-eighth of the whole flow from the edge of the water amongst a multitude of water-lilies; and three couple were observed playing in the water. Tell me, my young girl with beautiful locks, what was the whole number of geese?"

"Well, what was it?"

"What should you think?"

"About twenty."

"No, one hundred and forty-four. Now try another. The square root of half a number of bees, and also eight-ninths of the whole, alighted on the jasmynes, and a female bee buzzed, responsive to the hum of the male, inclosed a night in a waterlily. O, beautiful damsel, tell me the number of bees."

"That is not there. You made it."

"No, indeed I did not. I wish I had made it. Look and see."

He showed her the book, and she read it herself. He then proposed some of the geometrical questions.

"In a lake the bud of a water-lily was observed, one span above the water, and when moved by the gentle breeze, it sunk in the water at two cubits distance. Required the depth of the water."

"That is charming, but must be very difficult. I could not answer it."

"A tree one hundred cubits high is distant from a well two hundred cubits; from this tree one monkey descends and goes to the well; another monkey takes a leap upwards, and then descends by the hypotenuse; and both pass over an equal space. Required the height of the leap."

"I do not believe you can answer that question yourself, without looking into the book," said the laughing wife, laying her hand over the solution. "Try it."

"With great pleasure, my dear child," cried the confident school-master, taking a pencil and paper. After making a few figures and calculations, he answered,—

"There, my young girl with beautiful locks, there is the answer,—forty cubits."

His wife removed her hand from the book, and then, clapping both in triumph, she exclaimed,—

"No, you are wrong, you are wrong, my beautiful youth with a bee in your bonnet. It is fifty cubits!"

"Then I must have made some mistake."

"Of course you did. Your monkey did not jump high enough."

She signaled his mortifying defeat as if it had been a victory, by showering kisses, like roses, upon his forehead and cheeks, as he passed beneath the triumphal arch-way of her arms, trying in vain to articulate,—

"My dearest *Lilawati*, what is the whole number of the geese?"

THE FOOT BATH.—Most persons are aware of the intimate connection between the whole nervous system and the feet, manifested by the extraordinary susceptibility of the soles of the feet to external impressions; and such persons must readily appreciate the importance of this remedial appliance. The potency of mustard, onions, garlic, vinegar, ginger, pepper and other pungents, applied to the feet in a variety of aches, pains, cramps, and spasms, has long been celebrated among physicians and nurses. The intelligent hydropath will admit the importance of the principle—sympathy—upon which the employment of those articles has been based, while he will produce every desirable result of them all with simple water. As a derivative in affections of the head and chest, it is often used in connection with the sitz bath, with which it may be advantageously alternated. To prevent or remedy habitual cold feet, it is absolutely indispensable in a hydropathic course. Active exercise, in this case, should generally precede and follow the cold foot bath. The rules given for the regulation of the sitz bath will apply to this. Any vessel large enough to admit the feet, and water enough to cover them ankle deep, will answer.—*Water-Cure Journal*.

ICE AT LIMA.—Ice is a necessary of life at Lima, and is brought from the Cordilleras a distance of 23 Leagues. So essential is that climate to this refreshment that a lack of it for a few days is sufficient to cause a notable ferment among the people, and in all revolutions, therefore, the leaders cautiously abstain from applying the mules used for its carriages to any other purpose. The Indians hew the ice out of the glaciers in lumps of 150 pounds each, and lower it from the mountains by ropes. Other Indians receive it and carry it to a depot where it is packed upon mules. Two lumps form a mule load, and thirty of these loads are sent daily to Lima, where they arrive in eighteen or twenty hours. During the journey the ice loses a third of its weight; and what remains is sufficient to supply the city for a day. It is chiefly used in making ices, composed mostly of milk, or pine apple juice.

EFFECTS OF IMAGINATION.—A curious experiment was recently tried in Russia with some murderers. They were placed, without knowing it, in four beds where four persons had died of the cholera. They did not take the disease. They were then told they were to sleep in beds where some persons had died of malignant cholera, but the beds were, in fact, new, and had not been used at all. Nevertheless, three of them died of the disease within four hours. We state this upon the authority of the London Medical Times.

From the New England Washingtonian.

The Deacon for Me.

Father! said Deacon—'s young son,

(A most precocious wight.)

I had a dream, and a funny dream

Was the dream I dreamed last night.

Well, son, what was the funny dream

That has put you in such glee?

Were I to guess from your laughing phiz,

I should say you dreamed of me.

Father, I dreamed—you will think it strange,

Yet still it is true I snore;

I dreamed that the King of the country below

Walked into your grocery store!

The Devil! yes, father, the Devil! and you

Were drawing a glass of gin

For Ambrose Jones—who drowns his wits,

And broke his babe's arm in one of his fits,

The ugly old imp of sin.

I dream'd that the Devil walked boldly in

And swung his long tail on a chair,

And asked if you were not a Deacon, he did,

And (without looking) you said that you were

The Devil, he laughed, he switched his long tail,

And he grinned as he nodded to see:

Says he with a wink, [and the sparks flew like hail,

That 'ere is the Deacon for me!

MR. JEFFERSON.—The following profound

views of this distinguished statesman, are well

worthy of attention. Speaking of schemes of

emancipation he says.

As to the method by which this difficult work

is to be effected, if permitted to be done by our-

selves, I have seen no proposition so expedient,

on the whole, as that of emancipation of those

born after a given day, and of their education

and expatriation at a proper age. This would

give time for a gradual extinction of that species

of labor, and substitution of another, and lessen

the severity of the shock which an operation so

fundamental cannot fail to produce. The idea of

emancipating the whole at once, the old as well

as the young, and retaining them here, is of

those only who have not the guide of either

knowledge or experience on the subject. For

men, probably of any color, but of this color,

we know, brought up from their infancy

without necessity for or thought forecast, are, by

their habits, rendered as incapable as children

of taking care of themselves, and are extinguished

promptly wherever industry is necessary for

raising the young. In the mean time they are

pests in society by their idleness, and the depredations

in which they engage. The amalgamation with the other color produces

a degradation to which no lover of his country, no

lover of excellence in human character, can

innocently consent.

My opinion has ever been that, until more can

be done for them, we should endeavor with those

whom fortune has thrown on our hands, to feed

and clothe them well, protect them from ill-usage,

require such reasonable labor only as is performed

voluntarily by freemen, and be led by no repugnance

to abdicate them and our duties to

the laws do not permit us to turn them

loose, if that were for their good, and to com-

mute them for other property is to commit them

to those whose usage of them we cannot control.

THE FOLLOWING sensible remarks we copy

from the N. Y. Herald. We do not think the

consequences of the Anti Slavery movement

will be quite so bad as is assumed in the article,

but we do believe that they will be wretched

and deplorable.]

Throughout the free States of this republic,

the question of slavery, looking to the ultimate

abolition, is beginning to be broached, discussed

and talked of by all factions, and by some of the

leading men of the day. In this State Mr.

Van Buren and the barnburners are gradually

coming out and taking the same ground which

Garrison and the other anti-slavery agitators in

New England have held for some years past.

Senator Seward and his *clique* have for some

time past occupied a strong anti-slavery ground,

looking in the same direction, and are only waiting

for an opportunity to make another distinct

step in advance. In Kentucky and Missouri, a

species of the same agitation and the same

general subject is now under way. Henry Clay

HON. DAVID B. OGDEN.—This eminent and

venerable citizen, the father of Saml. M. Ogden

Esq., of this Parish, died in New York on Fri-

day, the 13th ult., of Cholera. We extract the

following sketch of his life, character and death

from the *N. Y. Herald* of the 19th ult.

The death of the Hon. David B. Ogden pro-

duced a great sensation among the members of

the bar, and a meeting was held as soon as the

event became known, for the purpose of paying

a tribute of respect to his character and mem-

ory. It appears that Mr. Ogden was engaged in

a very important case in court, up to a late

hour on Friday last. On that day, after the ad-

jourment of the court, he hurried down to the

Staten Island ferry boat, on the way to his resi-

dence on Staten Island, where he resides with

his family. Friday was the hottest day we have

had in these latitudes for ten years past. Mr.

Ogden overheated himself, and, before he left

the ferry boat, was seized with a diarrhoea, and

went to his home under the influences of it, and

from which he never recovered.

Mr. Ogden was a man much esteemed in this

community. He was a native of Newark, New

Jersey, and a descendant from the old revolu-

tionary stock of the Ogden family of that State.

Some years ago he was elected by the federal

party of this State as member of Congress, and

distinguished himself greatly in that capacity,

both as a statesman and a politician. Since

that time he has devoted himself entirely to his

professional business, in which he held the high-

est rank among the members of the New York

bar, and only occasionally intermixed with poli-

tics, at some of the minor State elections. He

was a man of the highest talent, and was gen-

erally esteemed to be one of the first lawyers in

the United States. His practice, both in the

federal and State courts, was extensive and high-

ly lucrative; but for the last fifteen years or

more, his legal services were not to be obtained

in common. He confined himself wholly to cases

of great magnitude and importance, and to

private consultations, in which his opinion was

eagerly sought, and was of great weight. For

some years past, he has been one of the perma-

nent salaried counsel on behalf of the corpora-

tion of Trinity Church—counsel who are en-

gaged in advance for this wealthy corporation,

and cannot therefore, ever be employed against

it.

Mr. Ogden was a man of stern integrity, of

considerable profusion in his expenditures, and

distinguished for a perfect carelessness about

money and business affairs. At one time he re-

ceived as much as forty thousand dollars in fees

for professional services, in a matter connected

with some foreign claims, to a large amount,

and in less than eighteen months, it is said, he

had expended the whole amount in various

ways. He held the post of Surrogate of this

city some years ago, having been appointed by

Governor Seward, but lost it by one of the com-

mon revolutions of parties, and was superseded

by Mr. McVeon, at the appointment of Governor

Rouse. At the time of his death he was 74

years of age. He was still, however, an active

and strong man, very regular in his habits, and

never omitting to take his morning and evening

walk. He leaves behind him numerous de-

scendants and connections, and a large circle by

whom his value will be duly estimated, and his

loss sincerely mourned. He resided at Port

Richmond, on Staten Island, where he breathed

his last, within a few hours after leaving the

ferry-boat, on Friday last.

IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.—We were not

aware until recently, that the books of newspa-

per publishers are consulted to quite a large

extent by people in business, to ascertain the

pecuniary standing of persons. Debts for newspa-

pers come due once a year; and persons who

pay regularly for their papers, are regarded as

prompt men, and worthy of confidence. To

ascertain whether a man is good, they find out

what paper he takes, and contrive in some way

to peep into the account. Men who are good

are sure to pay for their newspapers; and if

they do not pay for these they think them not

GOOD.

Another narrow escape from burting

alive.—Some four or five appalling cases of

this sort have occurred at Cincinnati and St.

Louis, lately, in the midst of the fearful rate of</