

AN AUTUMN DAY.

London skies and a lonesome shadow
Where summer has passed with her gorgeous train.
Snow on the mountain and frost on the meadow—
A white face pressed to the window pane
A cold mist falling, a bleak wind calling,
And oh! but life seems vain.
Rain is better than golden weather
When hearts are chilled with a dumb despair.
Dead leaves lie where they walked together;
The hammock is gone and the rustic chair.
Let bleak snows cover the whole world over,
It will never again seem fair.
Why should the beautiful, passionate Summer
Always leave pain where her footsteps have trod,
Hopes that were brought by this treacherous comer,
Chilled like her roses lay crushed on the sod.
Yet love dead with sorrow may spring up to-morrow,
And bloom like the garden of God.
Time laughs lightly at youth's sad "never."
Summer shall come again smiling once more;
High o'er the cold world the sun shines forever—
Hearts that seem dead are alive at the core.
Oh! but the gain of it! oh! but the gain of it—
After the shadows pass o'er.
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox in New York Mercury.
MAXIMILIAN'S "BLACK DECREE."

The Unfortunate Monarch Said To Be a Martyr to His Wife's Ambition.

The princess Josefa de Iturbide, who still reveres the memory of Maximilian, had told me so much of his sincere desire to "regenerate Mexico" and his firm belief that he was not offered the throne by a mere faction, but by a large majority of the people, that one day I ventured to reply: "Princess, I admit all you have said with regard to Maximilian, but Carlotta certainly was a monster of cruelty—so ambitious that she was willing to wade to the throne through a sea of blood—and to her influence is attributed the issuance of the "Black Decree." You can scarcely excuse her for the promulgation of that infamous measure." The princess turned a shade paler and replied:

"The real history of the decree is little known. The suggestion of that military measure came from France. Not only Bazaine—whom I so often warned his majesty was an arch-traitor—but other commanders indorsed and urged it; but from personal knowledge I assure you the emperor three times refused to sign it. Then the ministers said: "It need not be enforced. Sign the document and let the decree be promulgated and merely held in terrorism over the heads of the rebels." At a fourth meeting of the council some of the most distinguished French and Mexican generals were permitted to assist, and upon the full understanding that the decree of death was not to be enforced, but that on various pretexts lives were to be spared, his majesty signed the order, and only upon the condition I have named did the empress urge him to consent to its promulgation."

For the benefit of our countrymen who have never heard of this episode in Mexico's last struggle for liberty I beg leave to state that the substance of the imperial order, generally called "The Black Decree," was:

"If any Mexican taken in arms refuses to swear allegiance to the imperial government, he shall be shot within twenty-four hours."

"MAXIMILIAN."

Boys of from 16 to 20 years of age and hundreds—some assert thousands—of patriotic men were murdered because they refused to take the oath of fealty to the emperor. It has been affirmed that the "Black Decree" occasioned the death of 8,000 Mexicans. Mothers have told me of their youthful sons, who, animated by patriotism, secretly left their homes and colleges to join the patriots in defense of their country and, having been taken prisoners, were shot a few hours after their arrest without being allowed even spiritual aid or consolation, colonels, captains, and others stating: "There is no priest here." "We have no time to seek for godly counselors," etc. Some of these victims were even denied the meagre privilege of writing a few words of farewell to their parents and other dear ones—wives or children, officers brutally stating: "We can not furnish writing materials or undertake to transmit letters for hordes of rebels."

Maximilian bewailed his weakness when to stay the evil he had sanctioned, but Carlotta rejoiced in the death of those who refused to acknowledge imperial sway, and no sentiment of pity did she ever express for bereaved wives, orphaned children or soul-stricken parents. Therefore the women of Mexico in general say: "God punished her; her insanity is a judgment;" yet Maximilian is pitied—is regarded as a martyr to his wife's ambition.—City of Mexico Cor. Philadelphia Times.

An Opinion of Thoreau.

I am always glad to have the views of a sensible person, outside of the literary circles, upon my favorite authors, especially when the views are spontaneous. "Speaking of Thoreau," says my correspondent, "I am willing to allow most that is said in his praise, but I do not like him, all the same. Do you know, I feel that he was not altogether human. There is something uncanny about him. I guess that, instead of having a human soul, his body was inhabited by some ethereal deity that flourished in Grecian times. He seemed out of place among human beings."—John Burroughs in The Century.

Injurious to Agriculture.
It is estimated by those who have made the subject a study that the losses occasioned by insects injurious to agriculture in the United States reach the enormous sum of \$400,000,000 every year.—New York Tribune.



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