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DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY, AND THE DISSEMINATION OF MORALITY, LITERATURE, AND NEWS

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Biographical Sketch.

The gifted writer who has won such a wide and beautiful reputation around the domestic hearth-stones of this country, under the name of GRACE GREENWOOD, was born in Pompey, a quiet, agricultural town in Onondaga county, N. Y. Her family name was Sara G. Clarke, which, by her marriage with Mr. Leander K. Lippincott, of Philadelphia, in October last, is again changed; but the appellation by which she will be best known in the history of American literature, is that under which she made her earliest appearance in the field of authorship, and attracted a multitude of appreciative and admiring readers.

The first years of her childhood were spent with her parents, and a large family of brothers and sisters, in a pleasant rural home in her native place. Here she acquired that face-to-face familiarity with nature, that wild passion for out-door sports and exercises which made her a sort of Die Vernon at an early age, and which, if we may judge from her writings, the experience of maturer life has never quite taken out of her heart. No one but a genuine country-girl, with eye and soul alive to all the enchantments of woods, and waters, and verdant fields, could have given the living description of Beauty which we find in one of her published letters. "Beauty," says the jocund Grace, "is no fragile, rouged, and powdered ball-room belle; but a wild, blooming, vigorous nymph of the mountains, a bounding, sparkling Undine, amid green dells and dashing water-falls.—Her eye flashes not back the glaring brilliancy of the gay saloon, but warm sunshine and clear starlight; and her voice is not tuned to the harp and guitar, but sings with the wild bird and laughs with the rivulet. Hebe herself was no luxurious habitant of a marble palace, with silken couches and velvet carpets, but reclined beneath the shades and danced amid the dews and moving splendors of the sacred mountains of the gods. The Muses and Graces were all young ladies of rural propensities and most unrefined habits."

A little incident of her childhood is related in one of her juvenile works, which shows the precocious development of that spirit of enterprise and romance which seems to be ingrained in her natural temperament. On a certain occasion, it appears that the young madcap had called forth the displeasure of her affectionate mother, by indulging in a wild equestrian performance which had nearly ended in broken bones. "It happened," says Grace, "that I had on that day a nice new dress, which I had sadly soiled by my fall from the pony; so that when I reached home my mother was greatly displeased. I suppose I made a very odd appearance. I was swinging my bonnet in my hand, for I had a natural dislike to any covering for the head. My thick, dark hair had become unbraided and was blowing over my eyes. I was never very fair in complexion, and my face, neck, and arms had become completely browned by that summer's exposure. My mother took me by the shoulder, set me down in a chair, not very gently, and looked at me with a real frown on her sweet face. She told me in plain terms that I was an idle, careless child! I put my finger in one corner of my mouth, and swung my foot back and forth. She said I was a great romp! I pouted my lip, and drew down my black eyebrows. She said I was more like a wild young squaw than a white girl! Now this was too much; it was what I called 'twitting upon facts;' and 'twas not the first time that the delicate question of my complexion had been touched upon without due regard for my feelings. I was not to blame for being dark,—I did not make myself,—I *had* seen fairer women than my mother. I felt that what she said was neither more nor less than an insult; and when she went out to see about supper, and left me alone, I brooded over her words, growing more and more out of humor, till my naughty heart became so hot and big with anger, that it almost choked me. At last, I bit my lip and looked very stern, for I had made up my mind to something great. Before I let you know what this was, I must tell you that the Onondaga tribe of Indians had their village not many miles from us. Every few months, parties of them came about with baskets and mats to sell. A company of five or six had been to our house that very morning, and I knew that they had their encampment in our woods, about half a mile distant. These I knew very well, and had quite a liking for them, never thinking of being afraid of them, as they always seemed kind and peaceable.

"To them I resolved to go in my trouble. They would teach me to weave baskets, to fish, and to shoot with the bow and arrow. They would not make me study, nor wear bonnets, and they would never find fault with my dark complexion. I remember to this day how softly and slyly I slid out of the house that evening. I never stopped once, nor looked round, but ran swiftly till I reached the woods. I did not know which way to go to find the encampment, but wandered about in the gathering darkness, till I saw a light glimmering through the trees at some distance. I made my way through the bushes and brambles, and after a while came upon my copper-colored friends. In a very pretty place, down in a hollow, they had built them some wigwams with maple saplings, covered with hemlock boughs. There were in the group two Indians, two squaws, and a boy about fourteen years old. But I must not forget the baby, or rather pappoose, who was lying in a sort of cradle, made of a large, hollow piece of bark, which was hung from a branch of a tree by pieces of wild grape-vine. The young squaw, its mother, was swinging it back and forth, now far into the dark shadows of the pine and hemlock, now out into the warm fire-light, and chanting to the child some Indian lullaby. The men sat on a log, smoking gravely but silently; while the boy lay on the ground, playing lazily with a great yellow hound, which looked mean and starved, like all Indian dogs. The old squaw was cooking the supper in a large iron pot, over a fire built among a pile of stones.

"For some time, I did not dare to go forward; but at last I went up to the old squaw, and looking up into her good-humored face, said, 'I am come to live with you, and learn to make baskets, for I don't like my home.' She did not say any thing to me, but made some exclamation in her own language, and the others came crowding round. The boy laughed, shook me by the hand, and said I was a brave girl; but the old Indian grinned horribly and laid his hand on my forehead, saying, 'What a pretty head to scalp!' I screamed and hid my face in the young squaw's blue cloth skirt. She spoke soothingly, and told me not to be afraid, for nobody would hurt me. She then took me to her wigwam, where I sat down and tried to make myself at home. But somehow I didn't feel quite comfortable. After a while, the old squaw took off the pot, and called us to supper. This was succotash, that is, a dish of corn and beans, cooked with salt pork. We all sat down on the ground near the fire, and ate out of great wooden bowls, with wooden spoons, which I must say tasted rather too strong of the pine. But I did not say so then,—by no means,—but ate a great deal more than I wanted, and pretended to relish it, for fear they would think me ill-bred. I would not have had them know but what I thought their supper served up in the very best style, and by perfectly polite and genteel people. I was a little shocked, however, by one incident during the meal. While the young squaw was helping her husband for the third or fourth time, she accidentally dropped a little of the hot succotash, on his hand. He growled out like a dog, and struck her across the face with his spoon. I thought that she showed a Christian spirit, for she hung her head and did not say any thing. I had heard of white wives behaving worse.

"When supper was over, the boy came and laid down at my feet, and talked with me about living in the woods. He said he pitied the poor white people for being shut up in houses all their days. For his part, he should die of such a dull life, he knew he should. He promised to teach me how to shoot with the bow and arrow, to snare patridges and rabbits, and many other things. He said he was afraid I was almost spoiled by living in the house and going to school, but he hoped that, if they took me away and gave me a new name, and dressed me properly, they might make something of me yet. Then I asked him what he was called, hoping that he had some grand Indian name, like Uncas, or Miantonimo, or Tushmalahah; but he said it was Peter. He was a pleasant fellow, and while he was talking with me I did not care about my home, but felt very brave and squaw-like, and began to think about the fine belt of wampum, and the head-dress of gay feathers, and the red leggings, and the yellow moccasins I was going to buy myself with the baskets I was going to learn to weave. But when he left me, and I went back to the wigwam and sat down on the hemlock boughs by myself, somehow I couldn't keep home out of my mind. I thought first of my mother, how she would miss the little brown face at the supper-table, and on the pillow, by the fair face of my blue-eyed sister. I thought of my young brother, Albert, crying himself to sleep, because I was lost. I thought of my father and brothers searching through the orchard and barn, and going with lights to look in the mill-stream. Again I thought of my mother, how, when she feared I was drowned, she would cry bitterly, and be very sorry for what she had said about my dark complexion. Then I thought of myself, how I must sleep on the hard ground, with nothing but hemlock boughs for covering, and no body to tuck me up. What if it should storm before morning, and the high tree above me should be struck by lightning! What if the old Indian should not be a tame savage after all, but should take a fancy to set up the war-whoop, and come and scalp me in the middle of the night!

"The bell in the village church rang for nine. This was the hour for evening devotions at home. I looked round to see if my new friends were preparing for worship. But the old Indian was already fast asleep, and as for the younger one, I feared that a man who indulged in beating his wife with a wooden spoon would hardly be likely to lead in family prayers. Upon the whole, I concluded I was among rather a heathenish set. Then I thought again of home, and doubted whether they would have any family worship that night, with one lamb of the flock gone astray. I thought of all their grief and tears, till I felt my heart would burst with sorrow and repentance, for I dared not cry aloud.

"Suddenly, I heard a familiar sound at a little distance,—it was Carlo's bark! Nearer and nearer it came: then I heard steps coming fast through the crackling brushwood; then little Carlo sprang out of the dark into the fire-light, and leaped upon me, licking my hands with joy. He was followed by one of my elder brothers, and by my *mother!* To her I ran. I dared not look in her eyes, but hid my face in her bosom, sobbing out, 'O mother, forgive me! forgive me!' She pressed me to her heart, and bent down and kissed me very tenderly, and when she did so, I felt the tears on her dear cheek.

"I need hardly say that I never again undertook to make an Onondaga squaw of myself, though my mother always held that I was dark enough to be one, and I suppose the world would still bear her out in her opinion."

While she was still a school-girl, her parents removed to the city of Rochester, where she enjoyed the excellent educational advantages of that place, and gained her first experience of the social life to which she has remained enthusiastically attached. Writing several years after, Grace pays a feeling of tribute to the temporary residence of her earlier years. "Rochester," she says, "was for some years my well-beloved home; here it was that I spent my few school-days; received my trifle of book-knowledge; for much learning has never yet made me 'mad' or 'blue.' It was here that woman's life first opened upon me; not as a romance, not as a fairy dream, not as a golden heritage of beauty and of pleasure; but as a sphere of labor, and care, and endurance; an existence of many efforts and few successes; of eager and great aspirations, and slow and partial realizations. Life has thus far been to me severely earnest, profoundly real, and my days of romantic pleasures and ideal visions are yet to come."

In 1843, she removed, with her parents, to New-Brighton, Pa., where she has since resided until her marriage, although spending a very considerable portion of her time in Washington, Philadelphia, and other eastern cities. Soon after her removal to New-Brighton, she commenced her career as an authoress. Her first productions, under the signature of "Grace Greenwood," were contributed to the *New-York Mirror*, then under the editorial care of George P. Morris and N. P. Willis. The brilliant literary fame of both these gentlemen did not make them indifferent to the promise of rising genius. They at once discerned the sterling merit of their contributor, reached forth to her the hand of friendly welcome, spoke those words of kindly encouragement which are so grateful and precious to the heart of the timid aspirant, and challenged for her writings the public favor, which they have since enjoyed in no stinted measure. In the recollections of these eminent men, we are sure there can be but few brighter passages than the effective sympathy which, on this occasion, they have accorded to the first modest efforts of youthful genius.

Among the poetical pieces which attracted the greatest share of admiration, may be reckoned the "Ariadne," the "Horseback Ride," and "Pygmalion." These were succeeded by various compositions in prose, which at once attracted notice, piqued curiosity, and made the name of "Grace Greenwood" a prime favorite among the numerous popular contributors to the widely-circulated magazines of the day. In connection with other literary labors, she was the editor of "The Lady's Book" for a year. Her first volume, entitled "Greenwood Leaves," was brought out in 1850, by Ticknor, Reed & Fields, of Boston. It consists of a collection of tales, sketches, and letters, showing the genial powers and exuberant vivacity of the writer to singular advantage. In 1851, she published a volume of "Poems," and an admirable juvenile story-book, called "History of My Pets." A second series of "Greenwood Leaves" was issued the following year, and also another juvenile work, called "Recollections of my Childhood." Each of these excellent works for the perusal of young people (though not without a charm to readers of every age) has been received with cordial delight as well in England as in our own country.

In the spring of 1852, Grace was enabled to carry into effect a long-cherished desire to visit Europe. She passed about fifteen months in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy, and the Tyrol, gratifying her native love of art by the sight of its choicest specimens in the galleries of the Old World, gaining fresh materials for poetry in the scenery and suggestions of a foreign land, forming an acquaintance with several of the most attractive celebrities in literature, and enlivening the social circles in England in which she was warmly received by the resistless attractions of her wit, piquancy, originality, and Young American freedom from the smooth petrifactions of European society. She returned from her transatlantic tour in August last, and has since prepared a record of her travels, entitled "Haps and Mishaps of a Tour in Europe," which will soon be issued in Boston, by Ticknor, Reed & Fields. This volume, it may be predicted, will possess as great an interest for the public in general, as any of her previous works. With her acuteness of observation and never-failing flow of spirits, she is singularly adapted to give a living, daguerreotype sketch of her impressions, and has doubtless embodied in this production a series of salient comments on life and society, as it passed under her quick and penetrating eye abroad.

In October, 1853, she commenced the publication of "The Little Pilgrim," a monthly juvenile issued in Philadelphia by Mr. Lippincott, which bids fair to prove as great a favorite with the young readers as the collection of stories heretofore prepared for their entertainment.

In the writings of Grace Greenwood we discover the perpetual influence of her personal character. There are scarcely any authors whose productions are so much the expression of their own individuality. Free from the trammels of artificial literary taste, acknowledging no allegiance to the absurd restrictions of the schools, loyal to the spontaneous inspirations of nature, she dips her pen in her true woman's heart, and bodies forth those fresh, beautiful, and vigorous creations, which are never the fruit of conventional training, or of timid, crouching imitation. Her prose writings are pervaded by the genuine spirit of poetry. Her poetry is the inevitable utterance of a highly imaginative nature. The latter is usually more carefully elaborated, but both are free, impulsive, often careering wildly in impetuous flights, but always with the impress of purity and a generous purpose. In her freest strains, she sings as the wild bird sings. The bobolink in a clover field is not more merry than she is in her mood of frolic gayety. At other times, her song gushes forth in plaintive melodies, like the sweet, sad warblings of the nightingdale. But this is never her habitual state. Her temperament is too genial, too vivacious, too full of love for all created things, to find content even in the daintiest sweetness of rapt melancholy.—Her healthy spirit always rebounds under the excitement of precious human sympathies, and of trust in the "dear God," of whom mortal tongue can say little but that he is Love.

Her familiarity with the external nature is revealed every where in her writings. She rejoices in all natural objects. Every flower that blooms, every animal that sports in the open air, every fresh plant of spring, every sweet breeze of Heaven, touches the cords of sympathy within her soul, and inspires the fluent melody of her verse. But her chiefest strength is in the warm glow of her affections. Herein she exhibits the true glory and joy of a sincere woman. Her thoughts ever cling to the old domestic fireside as the heaven of her youthful imagination. The paternal hearthstone is the weird Jacob's ladder of her memory, peopled with angels, and opening the passage to brighter worlds. She loves her parents, her brothers and sisters, with a love that can find no expression for its exuberant tenderness but in the impassioned language of poetry.

Her kindly spirit is beautifully blended with the sentiment of reverence in spite of occasional audacious sallies on the detection of falseness and pompous pretense. With the lively instinct of genius, she worships its presence in others. Free from literary rivalry, she is ever ready to do justice to genuine claims, and has found her chosen friends among those whom a less generous nature would have shunned as competitors in the race for fame.

It is not to be denied that she sometimes gives offense to excellent people, who mistake her frankness of manner for a want of feminine reserve, and her sarcastic pleasantries on social and public humbugs for a superfluous wickedness of temper that delights in the wholesale slaughter of the innocents. But all this is due to the want of the early training which inculcates hypocrisy as a virtue, and titters away all robust, natural feeling in the mincing phrases of polished apathy. Grace Greenwood has been faithful to the dreams of her childhood, and in this fidelity lies the secret of her success.

In the maturity of noble womanhood, her genius is doubtless destined to still higher triumphs than she has yet achieved. Inspired with the lofty democratic sentiment of the age, looking upon the course of Humanity with the natural piety of feeling which finds good every where and always hopes for the best, she will yet aid the approach of the era which has rarely been better described than in her own glowing words: "While it is ours to labor and to wait, it is a joy to know that, amid her degradation, her sorrow, and her crime, Earth still cherishes deep in her bruised heart a sweet hope, holy and indestructible, that 'the day of her redemption draweth nigh.' The day foretold by the fire-touched lips of prophets; the day whose coming was hailed by the martyrs in hosannas that rang through their prison walls and went up amid the flames. The day of the fulfilment of the angels' song; the day of the *equality* taught by Jesus in the temple, on the mount, and by the way-side; the day of peace, and rest, and the *freedom* of God."
—*Phrenological Journal.*

AN INQUIRING MIND.—The following anecdote which a friend related to us as an actual occurrence, smacks somewhat of the stories of children related by the *Knickerbocker:*

A stripling some eight years of age, was engaged in the manufacture of a stool, which on account of a disparity in the length of the legs, refused to stand up. After fruitless efforts to make it do so:

"Mother," said he, does the Lord see everything?"

"Yes, my son."

"Well," replied the young hopeful, "then I guess he'll laugh when he sees this stool."

AN INTENSE NATIVE AMERICAN.—The most decided case of nativism we have noticed is that of a person in Boston, who on being asked to attend the Pilgrim Ball at Plymouth, on the 22d inst., replied, that "he was not going forty miles to attend a celebration in honor of the arrival of a parcel of foreigners."

A Young Hero.

In the Madison (Ind.) Daily Argus, Dec. 1, we find the following account of the martyrdom of an American boy,—a youth of whom our nation may be proud—who died because he would not tell a lie:

A case of moral heroism, exceeding that imputed to Knud Iverson, occurred in Marquette county, in this State, a little over a year ago, the facts of which were established by judicial investigation and were related to us by Judge Larabee who presided at the trial.

A beautiful, fair-haired, blue-eyed boy about nine years of age, was taken from the Orphan Asylum in Milwaukee, and adopted by a respectable farmer, of Marquette, a professor of religion and a member of the Baptist persuasion. A girl, a little older than the boy, was also adopted into the family. Soon after these children were installed in their new home the boy discovered criminal conduct on the part of his new mother, which he mentioned to the little girl, and it thereby came to the woman; she indignantly denied the story, to the satisfaction of her husband, and insisted that the boy should be whipped until he confessed the falsehood.

The man—poor weak bigot—impelled by a sense of religious duty, proceeded to the task assigned him, by procuring a bundle of rods, stripping the child naked, and suspending him by a cord to the rafters of the house, and whipping him at intervals for over two hours, till the blood ran through the floor, making a pool upon the floor below; stopping only to rest and interrogate the boy and getting no other reply than "Pa, I told the truth—I cannot tell a lie;" the woman all the time urging him to do his duty. The poor little hero, at length released from his torture, threw his arms around the neck of his tormentor, kissed him and said, "Pa, I am so cold," and died. It appeared in evidence upon the trial of this man and woman for murder, that the child did tell the truth and suffered death by slow torture rather than tell a lie. The age of heroism and of martyrdom will not have passed till mothers cease to instill holy precepts into the minds of their infant offspring. The man and woman who murdered this angel child are now in the penitentiary at Wapun, to which they were sentenced for 10 years.

JEDEDIAH SEES THE TWINS.—After dickering some time with the long-legged doorkeeper, Jedediah Homespun up and spent a quarter to see the Siamese Twins. Looking at the curious pair for some time, Jed busted—

"How long hev you fellows been in that are kind of hitch?"

"Forty-two years," was Eng's reply.

"Du tell! Gettin' kind o' used to it, I calkilate, nin't ye?"

"We ought to be," said they.

"Yes, I vow you ought. You fellers belong to the same church—'spect you do?"

"Yes, indeed," said Chang.

"Want to know! Well, I swan yeou are hitched queer, said Jed, minutely examining the ligature. "One of yeou fellers dies, 'tother feller'll be in a pucker, I reckon."

"Would be bad," said Chang.

"Doni drink nothin' I guess—ever go in to swim?"

"Sometimes," said they.

After gazing at them a few moments in silence, Jed again *busts*—

"Look here, s'pose one on yeou fellers got into a scrape, and was abeout to be put in jail, how'd you manage that?"

"O," says Eng, "I'd go Chang's bail!"

"O yes, could do that, by hoky!"

And Jedediah having finished his cross-examination, went off whistling, giving a fresh lot of examiners room to put the Twins through a similar course of sprouts.

The Fugitive Law don't appear to work satisfactorily, either north or south. The Wheeling *Times* says: "The ferry master at Detroit says that at least 900 fugitive slaves had crossed at that point into Canada during the past year. It is also estimated that some 250 had crossed over at Cleveland. If these statements are correct, not less than 2000 slaves of a market value of $2,000,000, have passed into Canada within the past year — the fruit of the fugitive slave law."