

# THE COLUMBIA SPY.

SAMUEL WRIGHT, Editor and Proprietor.

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VOLUME XXX, NUMBER 30.]

COLUMBIA, PENNSYLVANIA, SATURDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 25, 1860.

[WHOLE NUMBER 1,540.]

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY MORNING

Office in Carpenters Hall, North-west corner of Front and Locust streets.

Terms of Subscription. \$1 50 per annum in advance, if not paid within three months, 2 00

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## Poetry

[From "All the Year Round"]

Book World.

When the dim presence of the awful Night  
Closes in its jeweled arms the slumbering earth,  
Alone I sit beside the lowly light  
That like a stream of diamonds on my hearth,  
With some joy-revering volume in my hand—  
A people's path, opiate and grand.

It may be Shakespeare, with his endless train  
Of inspired thoughts, a glorious progeny  
Borne on the whirlwind of his mighty strain,  
Through vision-lands forever far and free,  
His great mind beaming through these phantom crowds,  
Like evening suns from out a wealth of clouds.

It may be Milton, on his seraph wings,  
Soaring to heights of grandeur yet untrod;  
Now deep where horrid shapes of darkness cling,  
Now high in splendor on the feet of God;  
Or with the terror of angelic skies,  
Or wrapt in dreams of infant Paradise.

It may be Spenser, with his misty shades,  
Where forms of beauty wondrous tales rehearse,  
With breezy waves, and with cool accents  
Opening forever in his antique verse;  
It may be Chaucer, with his drabk divine,  
His Tabard old, and Pilgrims twenty-nine.

Perchance I linger with the mighty Three  
Of glorious Greece, that morning land of song,  
Who led the fearful front of Tragedy,  
And soared to fame on pinions broad and strong;  
Or with beneath the Trojan ramparts proud,  
The dim hosts, gathering like a thunder-cloud.

No rust of time can sully Quixote's mail,  
Still in the faithful *Suñcho* stout and hale,  
And Rastinante, his wonder-stricken eyes,  
Still throws gaudy shadows o'er their every deed.

Still can I revel in the old delights  
Of Celtic splendor, and of Gaelic strain,  
The star-wealth of Arabia's thousand nights,  
Shining till every other light grows dim;  
Wander away in broad, voluptuous lands,  
By streams of silver, and through golden sands;

Still hear the storm of Camoens burst and swell,  
His years of vengeance raging wild and free,  
Or wander by the glimmering fires of hell,  
With dreaming Dante and his spirit guide,  
Linger in Petrarch's green, melodious grove,  
Or hang with Tasso o'er his hopeless love.

Was there to me in all your sparkling dance,  
Wine purpled tongue, or vein of *Faust*'s disease,  
That roamed through the realms of rich Romance,  
Old *Book World*, and its wealth of rosy days,  
Forever with those brave and brilliant ones  
That fill Time's channel like a stream of suns?

## Selections

My Lady's Last Dance.

A DRESSING-MAID'S STORY.

Our house was one of the finest on the avenue, and of all the ladies in the land, there was not a fairer, or a kinder, or a better, than the mistress of our household. The Stanleys were looked up to in the block, and we of the basement took good care to sustain the dignity of the family. There were no children in the house—every one else was rejoiced there; I, on the contrary, felt it as a deprivation, for I had always been used to children, and loved them.

Mr. Stanley's time was passed entirely at the bank, in Wall street, and at the club. They had been married, I think, three years, and I entered my lady's service about a year after that happy event. She was twenty-four—she sixty. I believe every one considered it a very excellent match.

The household was a large one for a small family. Let me see—there were Mary, and Clotilde, and myself, *up stairs*; and then there were the chamber-maids, the laundry-maids, the cooks, the butler, the page, the groom and the coachman, besides Mr. and Mrs. Stanley; there were seventeen, I think, altogether.

We got along very well up stairs, with the exception of a jealous quarrel now and then between Clotilde and Mary. They were both good-looking, and more like ornaments to the establishment than of any real service. I remember one night we had given a great party, and after the supper, the champagne and good things having received their usual attention, I was sitting in the ladies' dressing-room reading, when happening to look up, I saw, to my horror, the reflection in the glass from the opposite room of young Dick Dascheels, who lived over the way—a very handsome fellow he was, too—in the very act of kissing Mary. Just at this peculiar juncture, at the most tender moment, who should appear upon the scene but Clotilde! I think I never saw such a scene. They were all aware of my being in the adjoining room, and as I was looked upon as being a little blue, each felt particularly anxious to keep such matters from me. However, it was too much for Clotilde—her French blood could not stand such perfidy as that—for only the moment previous, on the stairs, young Dascheels had sworn eternal devotion, on the strength of which he had received the same favor; and now, while her kisses were still warm upon his lips, he had wasted it upon a rival! A moment the passion of her nature overcame her, and seizing a sword-cane belonging to one of the guests, which we, with our usual curiosity, had been admiring and inspecting, she drew the blade and charged at the faithless deceiver. There was nothing left for poor Dick but flight, and dodging the deadly weapon, he doubled upon his assailant, and with railroad speed dashed through the door and down stairs. Clotilde soon subsided, and Mary had vanished in this air. As for me, I never turned my head; but a half hour later, happening to pass the parlor door, I saw Dick Dascheels dancing the scotchish with little Kitty Magruder, daughter of old Peter Magruder, President of the Lendnothing Bank, to whom report said he was then engaged, and which has since turned out to be true. I believe Clotilde is now the dressing maid of Mrs. Dascheels. I can tell you, people don't know the half that's going on in the world, especially in the basement and up stairs.

I knew her too well, and the cause of her malady, to press my poor services, so I hastened back to my retreat, for I had also come to aid, and again took up my position behind the curtains.

I now availed myself of the first opportunity to scrutinize the *stranger*, who had gradually made his way toward our part of the room.

Mr. Huntington, for he I felt it was, could not have been then more than thirty-two or thirty-three years of age. He was somewhat above the medium height, of a complexion inclined to be fair, but burned by tropical suns. He wore his beard and moustache long, and his dark magnetic eye flashed out from under his broad, high brow with a strange fire. His eyes possessed that peculiar character of expression which made one feel their power from a great distance. They were not so very large, but were finely set, and reflected a great soul.

Mrs. Stanley had risen to her feet, and stood conversing with the great English banker, when Mr. Huntington approached. His manner betrayed the most perfect composure, and his salutation was the most graceful one I ever witnessed. With a low bow he approached, and took my lady's offered hand, and they were near enough for me to hear his words, as in a low tone he said:

"It gives me pleasure to meet Mrs. Stanley with such happy surroundings, and to find that the years since I had the gratification of meeting her have dealt with her so kindly."

"We are glad to see you again Mr. Huntington; let me present you to my husband—I wonder where he is?"

"Who are you looking for?" asked Tighe Macaulay.

"My husband, Mr. Stanley."

"Oh! he's playing euchre in the card-room. I saw him there not five minutes ago."

At this moment the band struck up a polka, and every one rushed for partners, and I saw my lady leaning on Mr. Huntington's arm, making her way toward the card-room.

The apartment usually called the card-room opened out of the library, and adjoined the conservatory, and from where I was, looking through the trees and foliage, by standing on a bench I could see into it.

I saw my lady drag Mr. Huntington up to her husband, and heard Mr. Stanley's hearty "Glad to see you!" as, without rising, he turned and extended his hand when his lady presented the new guest. He then went on with his game. It went to my heart to see the look on her face, as she stood with one hand leaning on her husband's chair.

"Won't you take my hand? won't you cut in?" asked several, rising.

"No; I thank you; I am a poor player," she said, with a tone of much sadness.

"She can't play a bit—not a bit," added Mr. Stanley, "come, dear, you had better go and dance."

She still lingered near him, and leaned over his chair, but said not a word. She turned irresolutely several times, and at last she took Mr. Huntington's arm, and they went out through the conservatory door.

They approached the parlor window; only some orange trees and grape vines separated them from me; they were quite near. They had been talking as they came up the conservatory, and now they paused by the window.

"Stay one moment, Isabelle," he said.

"Since you have spoken of the past, I may surely be permitted to add a single word—now hear me. When, five years ago, walking on Brooklyn Heights, the last night that you and I ever met until this, I plighted to you my truth, and took your maiden word that you would be true, did you think the words I then spoke came only from the lips, or that the love of Edward Huntington was a thing to be idly esteemed? Did you believe that I loved as boys love, with a love which a new face would change? Or what thought you of me, Isabel, that I have been treated thus? I ask with no desire to do your soul harm, or to disturb in the slightest degree the unruffled current of your present destiny. Believe me, I have no such motive. I would simply solve a problem which has troubled me much—perhaps grieved me—and which your former relationship has left unridled both in my heart and brain."

"Edward Huntington, I must not listen to you—let me go!" she made no movement, and stood as before, with her arm resting on his, beside a vase of heliotropes, whose rich fragrance melted all the air.

"Nay, stay," he said, "the world seldom sees so rare a meeting, and I would add to the lessons which my love to you has taught me. But, all jesting apart, Isabelle—forgive me that I call you by the dear old name; it will be only for this evening, never again—I have suffered much, very much, since we parted. I heard from you only once. I was lying sick—dying, they said—with the yellow fever, in Panama. They brought letters to my room from the mail which had just arrived. My friend, with intuitive delicacy, selected the epistle which he thought would prove most welcome to my poor sick heart, and held it up before my eyes. I recognized your writing, and grew strong. It seemed as though by the strength of my will I triumphed over my sickness, and the fond words which I read in this, the only letter I ever received from you, added to my daily hopes, and I recovered. You must have thought me mad

from the letters I then wrote, for my love seemed to grow stronger and stronger with every new throbbing of returning life."

"Edward, did you write to me then?"

The voice of my mistress was very low and tremulous as she asked the question, and I remarked that her face was ashy pale. I had made several efforts to attract Mrs. Stanley's attention, and to make her aware of my presence, until I had imperceptibly become so interested in the conversation that I had a natural desire to learn the sequel; besides, I truly loved my mistress and thought that she might some day need my humble friendship, perhaps in this very matter, so I was silent, and they went on conversing in low and very sad tones.

"Isabelle, can it be possible," he rejoined, "that you did not receive the letters which I wrote you from Panama?"

"Never a single letter."

"Not one?"

"Edward, I never heard from you from the day we parted until to-night. I thought you dead."

"Great God! Great God!" was all he said, and then they were silent for a long time.

At length he resumed, but now his voice had lost all the bitterness which it had before.

"Now, Isabelle, I can understand it. I can absolve you from all blame. I see it all—Oh! had I but known all this, to what better account might I have turned my life! I took up a paper one day in San Francisco, and saw your marriage. It nearly killed me. I was sick, delirious, for many weeks. Men sneer at an affection which can thus shatter all of the strength and mind of their own sex; they call it weakness; but when a strong, calm man, is stricken down with such sorrow, it is terrible, terrible. No one knew the cause, but all my plans and aims in life seemed hopeless, fruitless. I broke up my business and went away. I said, time and travel will overcome this, and I must recover my manhood. I went to China, to India, to Peru, to Chili, to Brazil. Wherever I went, although I did not court or care for her favors, fortune seemed to smile upon me. At length fate cast me again upon my native shore. I went away poor, with a young heart full of high aims and bright hopes, with the consciousness of possessing the love of a true heart, and with the determination to bring back honor, and fame, and riches, with which to crown it forever as my own. I came back rich, with a heart and mind tried and chastened by experiences which rarely fall to human kind, with no one to love as a great heart can love, and with nothing to bind me to any spot on earth. I came as a stranger to my native land, unknown and caring not to be known, glad that there were some few relatives with whom I might share the bounty which fortune had given me; and that was done, determined to see you once, only once, and then go away, never to return. This was my intention, and now I see more than ever the propriety and necessity of fulfilling it. I shall always feel, however, better reconciled to my fate, since I learn that you were more worthy of my years of devotion than I have hitherto thought you."

"Edward, this is very, very sad. I cannot, must not say what I would. I have duties which I may forget, and which any regret of mine would seem to render me faithless to. I would not even ask to see you again. We each must go our separate ways, and God's will be done."

"Isabelle, I bow to what is inevitable, but I go from you a wiser and a better man—our absence may be remarked; let us enter—forgive me—good bye," and he leaned over and imprinted a kiss upon her forehead. At this moment Tighe Macaulay and Dick Dascheels were heard inquiring for Mrs. Stanley, and both declaring that they were entitled to her hand in the German. They reached the conservatory just as Mr. Huntington drew aside the curtain to enter.

"Hallo!" says Dick Dascheels, "I didn't mean to spoil a flirtation, but am I entitled to the German with you, Mrs. Stanley?"

"By no manner of means; my dear lady, did you not agree to lead the German with me?" broke in Tighe Macaulay.

"Really, gentlemen," my lady replied, "I am not equal to the German, and if I have made any engagement I cannot tell with which it was."

"It was with me," shouts Tighe Macaulay.

"By no manner of means; I had that honor," shouts Dick Dascheels.

I noticed that my lady looked very pale, and was much surprised when she said:

"Gentlemen, to settle the difficulty you must get other partners, and I will dance with my old friend, Mr. Huntington, if you will permit me."

"That will answer!" all exclaimed—"Lead off; lead off"—"room for the German; room for the German!" and the music struck up, and Mr. Huntington and my lady led the dance. The music was electrifying, and with some forty or fifty couples upon the floor, the dance was by far the most brilliant of the evening. Mr. Stanley came in from the card-room with the English banker; they stood near the conservatory window.

"Your wife is a splendid looking woman," the latter said; "she would grace a court."

Who is that gentleman dancing with her?—They dance well."

"Oh, ah!" replied Mr. Stanley, "my wife is rather a fine-looking woman. That gentleman? hum—let me see, I forget his name—he is an old flame, I believe, of my wife's."

As he uttered these words, I noticed my lady, who was passing him with her partner that instead in the dance, falter and stop, and although Mr. Huntington supported her with his arm around her waist, she sank gradually to the floor pressing both hands upon her heart and gasping for breath.

In an instant Mr. Huntington picked her up in his arms as he would a child, and ordering in a quick, determined voice for some one to summon a physician, he bore her up stairs and placed her upon her bed; I hurried on before and showed him the way.

The doctors soon arrived and the room was cleared, for everybody had crowded up stairs, my lady being very much beloved. Mr. Huntington had been chafing her hands, and Clotilde and I had been