A SEA-SHELL.

Cool lips of shell, clear, sea-shell warm and sweet,
Of your warbling one hears and sighs not sighing.
Of soft waves singing in each other's ear,
Small wavelets kissing one another's feet,
Where flakes of foam make music, slow speech
Tenderly sad to hear.

Tell me of foreign lands! Tell me broking words
Sung by the ripples on the still sea shore,
In silent, sleeping, sideless deeps of sea,
For there the flowers have voices like to birds,
That sing full-throated in this world of ours
Or each melodious rose.

Not now, not now, sweet shell, some other day
Tell me of sighings on the lonely shore,
And less that echo in blinds from your lips
Tell me not now of earth grown weak and gray,
Nor longing for the things that come no more,
Nor any broken love.

To me thy breathing bears another tone,
Of fresh cool currents coursing under sea,
And happy laughter of the sunny spray—
Ah! beneath these the words that are mine own,
Known but the message that they bear to me,
The things they seem to say?

Ah, sea-shell! it is this—"The soft blue deep,
Which thrills with a heart that knows thee and
is kind;
Sighed for thy sorrow, now is laughs with
thee;
Love is a secret which man cannot keep,
Hide it from heaven and the heedless wind,
But trust it with the sea."

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Messrs. Appleton & Co. publish another novel by Louisa Mühlbach, the embroideress of history, which combines in its title two great names, in the popular song, Goethe and Schiller. The admirers of Mrs. Mühlbach's method will find her at her best, moving with fine shadow in a subject that is thoroughly congenial to her and ornamenting the facts of biography with an ever-ready and skillful fancy. To be sure, her novel "Goethe and Schiller" has not the attraction of Goethe's Autobiography, but then it always gives a broader picture of the time, with its political cabals, and a more general view of society; and Mrs. Mühlbach is almost like Scott in her knack of throwing herself into the spirit of an age and giving narration the touches that impart probability. We may safely recommend any person who has not leisure to study up the career of the two poets in biographical sources, to peruse this absorbing novel, promising that the impression derived will not be a false one. Messrs. Appleton issue the book uniform with the other works they have published of the author, in large pages containing two columns, plainly printed and bound, and embellished with prodigal illustrations by Gaston Fay. Several of the latter, representing single figures of women, are improvements, and decidedly attractive.

The second tome of Appleton's six-volume concentrated library Dickens is now ready, consisting of three of the pretty pamphlets known as the "penny-dreadfully" issue sewn together in one. This is the most condensed Dickens, in any neat form, we know of, and is eminently suited to a traveling, sea-side or mountain library.

The plaid-cover pamphlet edition of Waverley includes "The Monastery."

These publications are issued by Messrs. Appleton, may be found on the counters of Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, 819 and 821 Market street.

DESIGNS BY THE OLD MASTERS. FLORENCE.

BY ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Sketches by Michael Angelo.

But in one separate head there is more tragic attraction than in twenty a woman's, three times studied, with divine and tender care, sketched and re-sketched in youth and age, beautiful and pitiful, merciful and cruel beyond words; fairer than heaven and more terrible than hell; pale with pride and weary with wrong—Leda.

In one drawing she wears a head-dress of eastern fashion plainer than western, but in effect made out of the same stuff as the wire plaited in the likeness of closely welded scales as of a venomous serpent, raised and waved and rounded in the likeness of a seashell. In some inexplicable way all her ornaments seem to partake of her nature, and to bear upon them her brand of beauty fresh from hell; and this therefore, in the vulgar machinery of symbolism, no serpentine or otherwise bestial emblem; the bracelets and rings are innocent enough in shape and workmanship; but in touching her flesh they have become infected with the taint of her nature. Broad bracelets divide the shapely splendor of her arms over the nakedness of her firm and luminous breasts, and below the waist there is passed a band as of metal. Her eyes are full of power and passionless lust and cold and blood; her hair, close and curled, seems ready to shudder in sunder and divide into snakes. Her throat is full and firm and hard to the eye as her bosom and arms. In one sketch she is drawn to the hip without any droop or lift of the chin; her mouth crueller than a tiger's, colder than a snake's and beautiful-beyond a woman's. She is the deadlier Venus incarnate, for upon earth no many name might be found for her—Lamia re-transformed, invested now with a fairer beauty, but divested of all feminine attributes not native to the snake.—a Lamia loveless and unassailable by the sophist, reader to drain life out of her lower than to fade for his sake at his side; or the Persian Amesoris, watching the only breasts on earth more beautiful than her own cut off from her rival's living bosom; or Cleopatra, not dying but turning serpent under the serpent's bite, or that queen of the extreme East, who with her husband marked every day as it went by some device of a new and wonderful cruelty in one design, where the cruel and timid face of a king peering out of the hide and covering head might stand for Abab's, and here for that of Jezebel. Another study is in red chalk; in it the only ornament's are ear-rings. In a third the serpentine hair is drawn up into a tuft on the crown with two ringlets hanging heavy and massive and curled tired snakes. There is a time upon him when the old strength of her head Palace which recalls and almost reproduces the design of Medusa. Here also the electric hair, which looks as though it would hiss and glitter with sparks if once touched, is wound up to a high knot with fine plaits and involutions, all that remains of it unbound falls in a single curl, like into a snake's likeness as it unwinds, right against a living snake twisted to the breast and throat. This is rightly registered as a study for Cleopatra; but notice has not yet been accorded to the subtle and sublime idea which transforms her death by the asp's bite into a meeting of serpents which recognize and embrace, an encounter between the woman and the worm of Nile, almost as though this match for death were a monstrous love-match, or such a mystic marriage as that pictured in the loveliest passage of *Sitammbo*, between the maiden body and the scaly coils of the serpent and the priestess alike made sacred to the moon; so closely do the snake and the queen of darkness caress and cling. Of this idea Shakspeare also had a vague and great glimpse when he made Antony murmur, *"Where my serpent of old Nile?"* uttering a foretaste of her death with the full sweet savor of her supple and amorous "pride of life." For what indeed is lovelier or more luxuriously loving than a strong and graceful snake of the purest kind?

The Nun-Mistress of Filippo Lippi.

The sketches of Filippo Lippi are exquisite and few. One above all, of Lucrezia Buti, in her girlhood, as the patient friend of her at Prato in the convent, is of a beauty so intolerable that the eyes can neither endure nor abstain from it without a pleasure close over to pain which compels them to cease looking, or a desire which, as it compels them to return, relapses into delight. Her face is very young, more faultless and fresher than the first forms and colors of morning; her pure mouth, small and curved, cold and tender; her eyes, set with an exquisite mastery of drawing in the clear and gracious face, seem to show actual colors of brilliant brown in their cloyed and lucid pupils, under their chaste and perfect eyelids; her hair is deeply drawn back each from the sweet low brows and small rounded cheeks, heaped and hidden away under a knotted veil, whose flaps fall on either side of her bright round throat. The world has changed for painters and their Virgins since the lean school of Angelico had its day and its way in art; this study assuredly was not made by a kneeling painter in the intervals of prayer. More vivid, more fertile and more dramatic than Lippo, the great invention and various power of Benozzo never produced a face like this. For pure and simple beauty it is absolutely, unsurpassable; innocent enough for a Madonna, but pure by nature, not chaste through religion. No cross-bars have helped to compose the holiness of her beauty. The megrim and artificial anxiety of ascetic by accident or abstention by choice is nothing in common with her chastity. She might be as well a virgin chosen of Artemis as consecrated to Christ. Mystic passions and fleshless aspirations never taken hold upon her sense of faith. No flower and animal is more innocent; none more capable of giving and of yielding to the pleasure of what they give. Before the date of her immortal portrait, there was probably no artist capable of painting such a thing at all; and in none of the many paintings does the stolen nun look and smile with a more triumphant and serene supremacy of beauty.

Andrea del Sarto and Lucrezia.

To praise him would need sweeter and purer speech than belongs to us of this age. To me as the Tuscan April in its temperate days, fresh and tender and clear, but chilled and kindled by such air and light as fills the air of the growing year with fire. At Florence only can one trace and tell how great a painter and how various he was. There only, but surely there, can the influence and pressure of the things of time on his immortal spirit be understood; how much of him was killed or changed, how much of him could not be. They are the fleshly fruits of his flowering manhood, when the bright and brown genius of him had free play and large delight in its hand, which seem the fresh interest of invention was still his, and the dramatic season, the pleasure in the play of life, the power of motion and variety, before the old strength and sight of fight had passed from weary wing and clouded eye, the old pride and energy of enjoyment had gone out of hand and heart. How the change fell upon him, and how it wrought, no one may see who compares his later with his earlier work; with the fetes, for instance, of collins representing the story of St. John Baptist, in the little cloister of Lo Scalzo, to these mournful desires there is such pathetic and exhausted rance of young power, of fresh and exuberant imagination, that only by the innate grace can one recognize the hand of the master whom hitherto we knew by the works of his after life, when the gift of grace had survived the gift of invention. The old and other gifts it did survive, all pleasure of life and power of mind, all the conscience of the man, his love of his wife, his children, his friends, his life and honor, heart-break and shame. Of these his change of touch, his sweetness of execution, his "Elysian beauty, melancholy grace," cultived, and blossomed in their dust. Turn from that cloistral series to those pictures painted when he was "faultless," and of nothing more; and seeing all the growth and all the growth of the change and all the loss, one to whom the record was unknown would feel and foreknow his story and his sorrow. In the cloister, what life and fulness of growing and strengthening genius, what joyous sense of its growth and its fair field before it, what dramatic delight in character and action; what sense of new powers in the wilderness and the few first listeners are gathered together at his feet, old people and poor, soul-stricken, and children, young and worn, still faces, and a spirit in their tired eyes that feeds hunger and thirst, and by his words,—all the haggard funereal group gradual fire and whitened scarf of Salome dances before Herod, an incarnate figure of music, grave and graceful, light and glad, the song of a bird made flesh, with perfect poise of her sweet slight body from the maiden face to the modest feet; no tyrannous or treacherous goddess of deadly beauty, but a virgin virgin, the cold charm of girlhood and the mobile charm of childhood, as indifferent and innocent when she stands before Herodias, and when she receives the severed head of John with her slender and steady hands; a pure, bright animal, knowing nothing of man, and of life, nothing but instinct and motion. In her mother's matrons and conscious beauty there is visible the voluptuous will of a harlot and a queen; but for herself she has neither malice nor pity; her beauty is a maiden force of nature, capable of bloodshed without bloodguiltiness; the king hangs upon the music of her movement, the rhythm of leaping life in her fair fleet limbs, as one who listens to a tune, subdued by the rapture of sound, absorbed in perfect delight.

I know not where the subject has been touched with such fine and keen imagination as here. The time came when she danced, and Salome was to dance before the eyes of the painter; and she required of him the head of a man, but his own soul, and he gave it, and forfeit into her hands. With the coming of that time upon him came the Spirit upon her heart and hand, "the work of an imperious mind and power." Those words, set by the prophet as a brand upon the fallen foreheads of the chosen bride, come back to mind as one studies in her face the signature of the fall calm lineaments, the large and serene beauty of Lucrezia del Prede; a predominant and plausible beauty, placid and unperplexed, but displeaded with or fought against. Voluptuous always and slothful, subtle as serpents, and sweet beyond measure, full of heavy beauty and warm slow grace, her features bear no sign of possible love or conscience. Seen side by side with his clear sad face, here tells more of the story than any written record, even though two poets of our age have taken it up. In the loveliest and feeble melodrama of Alfred de Vigny there is no touch of tragedy, hardly a shade of passionate and piteous truth, in Mr. Browning's noblest poem,—his noblest it seems to me,—the whole tragedy is distilled into the right words, the whole man raised up and re-clothed with flesh. One point only is but lightly touched upon,—unless it could not be by an eye so sharp and skillful, so effect upon his art of the poisonous solvent of love. How his life was corroded by it and his soul burnt into dead ashes, we are shown in full; but we are not shown in full what a painter he was before, what as a painter he might have been without it. This is what I think the work of Lucrezia, and sage, seen near together, as at Florence, make manifest to any loving and studious eye. In those latter works, the inevitable fatal figure of the woman recurs with little diversity or change. She has grown into his art, and made it even as herself; rich, monotonous in beauty, incomplete, without heart or spirit. But his has not been always the "low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand" it was then. He had started on his way towards another goal than that. Nothing now is left him to live for but his faultless hand and her faultless face,—still drawing in the clear and gracious face, seem to show actual colors of brilliant brown in their cloyed and lucid pupils, under their chaste and perfect eyelids; her hair is deeply drawn back each from the sweet low brows and small rounded cheeks, heaped and hidden away under a knotted veil, whose flaps fall on either side of her bright round throat. The world has changed for painters and their Virgins since the lean school of Angelico had its day and its way in art; this study assuredly was not made by a kneeling painter in the intervals of prayer. More vivid, more fertile and more dramatic than Lippo, the great invention and various power of Benozzo never produced a face like this. For pure and simple beauty it is absolutely, unsurpassable; innocent enough for a Madonna, but pure by nature, not chaste through religion. No cross-bars have helped to compose the holiness of her beauty. The megrim and artificial anxiety of ascetic by accident or abstention by choice is nothing in common with her chastity. She might be as well a virgin chosen of Artemis as consecrated to Christ. Mystic passions and fleshless aspirations never taken hold upon her sense of faith. No flower and animal is more innocent; none more capable of giving and of yielding to the pleasure of what they give. Before the date of her immortal portrait, there was probably no artist capable of painting such a thing at all; and in none of the many paintings does the stolen nun look and smile with a more triumphant and serene supremacy of beauty.

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