

Poetry.

THE VOICE OF AUTUMN?

BY W. C. BRYANT.

There comes from yonder height, A soft rippling sound, Whose forest leaves are bright, And fall like flakes of light

It is the autumn breeze, That lightly floats on, Just sinks the weary leaves, Just stirs the glowing ferns,

He moans by sodgy brook, And visits with a sigh The last pale flowers that look, From out their sunny nook,

O'er shouting children flies That light September wind, And, kissing cheeks and eyes, He leaves their merry cries

And wanders on to shake That soft queasy sound By distant wood and lake, Where distant fountains break

No bowser where maidens dwell Can win a moment's stay, Nor fair untrodlen dell: He sweeps the upland swell,

Mourn'st thou thy homeless state, Oh, soft replining wind? That early seeks and late The rest it is thy fate

Not on the mountain's breast, Not on the ocean's shores, In all the east and west: The wind that steps to rest

By valleys, woods and springs, No wonder thou should'st grieve For all the glorious things Thou touch'st with thy wings

Select Gales.

THE ORIENTAL MERCHANT.

When Haj Hamed borrowed a hundred dirrs of the merchant Kodadad, he swore by faith of the Prophet to return the sum thin six months from that time, and fixed hour and day. He was a young man, full of hope and confidence, and Kodadad as old and wary.

"This is perhaps a rash promise. Say a year." But Haj Hamed would not accept a further delay. He was going from Tarsus to Damascus on a commercial journey, and had accurately calculated the time.

He had earned his title of Haj, or Pilgrim, when a boy, by going in company with his father to the shrine of the Prophet; but this was the first journey he had undertaken since.

"This young man," said some, "believes that time was made only for him. What matters a day, more or less? At the end of life we shall have to regret our impatience. There are evils by every wayside. Why should we be eager to come up with them?"

These philosophical remarks found no favor with Haj Hamed, who, instead of imitating his companions, and reclining lazily under the shadow of trees on the green grass, listening to the songs of the birds and the gurgling of the stream, began at length to ram uneasily about. He saw that another caravan would set, and perhaps another, and behold them still in the lap of the same valley.

chant at length turned away and plunged into the deep recess of the forest. Nature had no charms for him. As he went, he counted in his memory the number of pieces of cloth his bales contained, compared the cost-price with the probable market-price, and revealed in the anticipation of gigantic profits to be realized in the paradise of his imagination—some dusty bazaar in the far-off city of Damascus.

While he was meditating on these sordid matters, he was suddenly recalled to himself by a surprising accident. A huge mantle was thrown over his head; and before he had time to struggle, he was cast on the ground, and rolled up, like a bale of his own goods, in complete darkness. At first, he thought that instant death was to be his fate; and he murmured, "May Heaven pay my debt to the merchant Kodadad!"

Haj Hamed was too thoroughly an Oriental not to understand his position, after a few moments' thought. He had evidently been watched during his progress through the forest by the inmates of some harem, unencumbered by male attendants, who in a spirit of fun had made him prisoner. The incident is not an uncommon one, if we may believe narrators; but it generally leads to disagreeable results. Our merchant felt uncomfortable. These merry girls were quite capable, he thought, after having made a butt of him, of throwing him down a well into a pond.

"Lady," said he, assuming a humble attitude, "this is not wise nor well. I am a merchant traveling with my goods that require care and watchfulness, and beg to be released."

She seemed annoyed that her beauty, which was great, did not amaze him; and replied:

"Fear nothing. There is no danger.—This is my father's kiosque. He has given it to me; and I live here with my maidens unmolested. There is a guard of slaves at the gate; but they only appear at a signal of danger—when I sound this shell."

She raised a conch to her lips, and a shrill sound filled the air. The slave-girls, scarcely understanding her motive, again cast the mantle over Hamed, and bade him be silent and motionless. Several men came hurriedly; but were dismissed with jeers and mockeries.

By this time, however, beauty had begun to exert its influence, and Haj Hamed, instead of rising, remained gazing in admiration at the lady of the place. She met his glance, at first, with a disdainful expression; but according to the Oriental idea, two such souls have secret sympathies, from the influence of which neither can escape.

This story, which is told in many different ways, illustrates the Oriental idea of mercantile probity. Turkish merchants, in their dealings among themselves, are famous for keeping their engagements with scrupulous exactitude; and the example of Haj Hamed is often cited as a model. Of course it is understood that the debt—all in good golden dinars—came to its destination in some mysterious way: the Prophet being always deeply interested in the good deeds of his servants.

Many thoughts kept him awake for many hours; it was not until the sky that stretched between the mountain tops overhead had begun to whiten, that at length, overcome by fatigue, he fell asleep. Pleasant visions spoke beneath his eyelids. When he awoke, the tents were struck, the camels were laden, and the people were filing off.

"Why this hurry?" he cried. "Was not this a pleasant place to tarry in? Time is eternal. There is no need to hasten from the present, which is joyful, to the future,

which is full of danger." Several merchants thought he was jeering them for their philosophy of the previous day, and hastened to complete their arrangements, and follow the caravan. Hamed's camels had been laden by his servants, and were ready to proceed. He hesitated a moment; but remembering his debt to Kodadad, cried, "March!" and went away with his heart full of new recollections.

The journey was prosperous, but tedious. When the caravan reached Damascus, the market was found to; be encumbered with merchandise, and sales were with difficulty effected. Month after month passed away; most of Hamed's bales still remained on his hands. The fifth month from the time of his departure had arrived, and he was beginning to despair of being able to perform his engagements. At length, however, a merchant about to proceed to Bagdad, made him an advantageous offer for the whole of his stock, and he was enabled to depart, after having realized a good profit. Several accidents and delays occurred on the journey; but the caravans reached the valley, one march from Tarsus, on the eve of the day when Hamed had promised payment to Kodadad. Most of the merchants immediately rode forward to glad their families and friends; but our young merchant, feeling his love for Leilah revive with intensity, determined to spend that day in endeavoring to obtain an interview with her. He wandered into the mountains, endeavoring to follow the same track as before; but although he several times imagined he recognized the trees and the rocks, his search was unsuccessful. All was wild and seemingly uninhabited. He called aloud "Leilah!" but the echoes only answered, "la! la!"—no, no; and when night came, he knew not which way to turn.

When light came, he remembered his promise to Kodadad. He was to pay the hundred dinars at noon. He determined to hasten to Tarsus on foot over the mountains, for he knew the general direction in which it lay. Many hours of travel were before him; but he was light of foot, and at length beheld in the distance the minarets of the city, and the winding course of the river. Suddenly the landscape darkened. Clouds seemed to come out of every valley, and to inundate the plain. The rain fell; the wind blew. He hastened onward, clutching the leather purse in which he carried his wealth, and invoking the assistance of the Prophet. When he reached the banks of the river, he heard, through the mist, a muezzin proclaiming the hour of noon from the distant mosque. The waters were turbulent. No ferry boat was in sight. It was impossible to cross.

Now it happened that Kodadad, remembering Haj Hamed's promise, had gone to his kiosque that day to wait for his money. The wind blew; the rain fell. The debtor did not appear. "We must allow him an hour's grace, for the storm is violent," said Kodadad. The muezzin chanted the hour of noon. The merchant called to his slave to bring another pipe. Presently, a bundle of reeds came floating along the misty waters; a black boy stooping forward seized them as they passed. He was about to cast them away again, when the unusual weight prevented him. "Master," said he, "this is a reed of lead." The merchant, who wished to pass the time, told him to break the reeds. He did so, and lo! a hundred glittering pieces of gold fell suddenly upon the pavement of the kiosque!

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And it will surprise none but very matter-of-fact people—to whom we do not address this legend—that this daughter turned out to be the same very imprudent Leilah, whose fascination had nearly caused Haj Hamed to dishonor his verbal promissory note. We learn, moreover, that she settled down into a most prudent and exemplary wife—which relieves our mind—for, except under extremely Oriental circumstances, we should not recommend her conduct for imitation.

AN ADVENTURE IN A TUNNEL.

A frightful accident which occurred a few weeks since to some of the workmen employed in the Halslaw Moor Tunnel, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, England, reminds us of an adventure, as related to the editor of Eliza Cook's Journal, not long ago, by a person in the employment of the telegraph company. He had been engaged in the inspection and repair of the telegraph wires and their fixings, which are subject to many accidents, and require constant looking after to insure their integrity and efficiency. Even when carried through tunnels in gutta percha casings, embedded in leaden tubes, they are liable to accidents from passing wagons, or, in winter, from lumps of ice falling down the sides of the shafts, and damaging the tubes. It appears that one day the door of a coal wagon had got loose in the long tunnel of the railway, and, dashing back against the side of it, had torn the tube, and even cut across the wires in many places. The telegraph was, therefore, broken; it could not be worked, and several workmen were sent into the tunnel to execute the necessary repairs. The person who related the following adventure acted in the capacity of inspector, and it was necessary for him to visit the workmen, ascertain the nature of the damage that had been done, and give directions on the spot as to the repairs, the necessity of completing which was of the greatest urgency.

"I knew very well," said he, "that the tunnel was of great length—rather more than two miles long—and that the workmen, who had set out in the morning from the station nearest, had entered it by its south end; so I determined to follow and overtake them, which I would doubtless be able to do somewhere in the tunnel, where they would be at work. I was accompanied by a little dog which trotted behind at my feet. After walking about a mile, I reached the entrance, over which frowned the effigy of a grim lion's head, cut in stone.

"There was as usual two lines of rails—the up line and the down line; and I determined to walk along the former, that I might see before the approaching lights on any advancing train, which I would take care to avoid by stepping on to the opposite line of rails, at the same time that I should thus avoid being run over by any train coming up behind from the opposite direction, and which I might not see in time to avoid. I had, however, taken the precaution to ascertain that no train was expected to pass along the up line, over which I was proceeding, for about four hours; but I was aware that they could not be depended upon, and therefore I resolved to keep a good look-out ahead. Along the down line, I knew that a passenger train was shortly to pass—indeed it was even now due; but by keeping the opposite line of rails, I felt I was safe, so far as that was concerned.

"I had never been in a tunnel of such length as this before, and I confess I felt somewhat dismayed when the light which had accompanied me so far into the entrance began to grow fainter and fainter. After walking for a short distance, I proceeded on in almost total darkness. Behind me there was the distant light streaming in at the tunnel mouth; before me almost impenetrable darkness. But, by walking in a straight line I knew that I couldn't miss my way, and the rails between which I walked; and which I occasionally touched with my feet, served to keep me in the road. In a short time I was able to discern a seeming spot of light, which gradually swelled into a broader gleam, tho' still at a great distance before me; and I knew it to be the opening of the nearest shaft. It was a mere glimmer amid the thick and almost palpable darkness which enveloped me. As I walked on, I heard my little dog panting at my heels, and the sound of my tread re-echoed from the vaulted roof. Save these sounds, perfect silence reigned.—When I stood still to listen, I heard distinctly the loud beating of my heart.

"A startling thought suddenly occurred to me. What if a goods train should suddenly shoot through the tunnel, along the line on which I was proceeding, while the passenger train, now due, came on in the opposite direction. I had not thought of this before, and yet I was aware that the number of casual trains on a well frequented railway is very considerable at particular seasons.—Should I turn back, reach the mouth of the tunnel again, and wait until the passenger train had passed, when I could then follow along the down line of rails, knowing that no other train was likely to follow it for at least a full quarter of an hour.

"But the shaft, down which the light now faintly streamed, was nearer to me than the mouth of the tunnel, and I resolved, therefore, to make for that point, where there was, I knew, ample room outside of both lines of rail to enable me to stand in safety until the

down train had passed. So I strode on.—But a low, hollow murmur, as if of remote thunder, and then a distant scream, which seemed to reverberate along the tunnel, fell upon my ears—doubtless the passenger train which I had been expecting, entering the tunnel mouth. But, looking ahead at the same time, I discerned through the gleam of daylight at the bottom of the shaft toward which I was approaching, what seemed a spark of fire. It moved; could it be one of the laborers of whom I was in search? It increased! For an instant I lost it. Again! This time it looked brighter. A moaning, tinkling noise crept along the floor of the vault. I stood still with fear, for the noise of the train behind me was rapidly increasing; and turning for an instant in that direction, I observed that it was in full sight. I could no longer disguise from myself that I stood full in the way of another train advancing from the opposite direction. The light before me was the engine lamp. It was now brilliant as a glowing star, and the roar of the wheels of the train was now fully heard amid the gloom. It came on with a velocity which seemed to me terrific.

"A thousand thoughts coursed through my brain on that instant. I was in the way of the monster, and the next moment might be crushed into bleeding fragments. The engine was almost upon me! I saw the gleaming face of the driver, and the glow of the furnace flashing its lurid light far along the lower edge of the dense volumes of steam blown from the engine chimney. In an instant I prostrated myself on my face, and lay there without the power of breathing, as I felt the engine and train thundering over me. The low hung ash-box swept across my back; I felt the heat of the furnace as it flashed over me, and a glowing cinder fell near my hand; but I durst not move. I felt as if the train was crushing over me. The earth vibrated and shook, and the roar of the wagon wheels smote into my ears with the thunder which made me fear their drums would crack. I clutched the earth, and would have cowered and shrunk into it if I could. There was not a fibre of my body that did not feel the horrors of the moment, and the dreadfulness of the situation. But it passed. With a swoop and a roar of the break-ran, the last in the train flew over me. The noise of the train was still in my ears, and the awful terror of my situation lay still heavy on me. When I raised my head and looked behind, the red light at the tail of the train was already far in the distance. As for the passenger train, it had also passed; but I had not heeded it, though it had doubtless added to the terrific noise which for some time stunned me.

"I rose up and walked on, calling upon my dog. But no answer—not so much as a whine. I remember its sudden howl. It must have been crushed under the wheels of some part of the train. It was no use searching for my little companion, so I proceeded, anxious to escape from the perils of my situation. I shortly reached the shaft which I had before observed. There was ample room at either side of the rails, to enable me to rest there in safety. But the place was cold and damp, and streams of water trickled down the sides of it. I resolved, therefore, to go on, upon the down line; but the tunnel being now almost filled with the smoke and steam of the two engines, which had just passed, I deemed it prudent to wait for a short time, until the road had become more clear, in case of any other train encountering me in my further progress. The smoke slowly eddied up the shaft, and the steam gradually condensed, until I considered the road sufficiently clear to enable me to proceed in comparative safety. I once more, therefore, plunged into the darkness.

"I walked on for nearly half an hour, groping my way; my head had become confused, and my limbs trembled under me. I passed two other shafts, but the light which they emitted was so slight, that they scarcely seemed to do more than make the darkness visible. I now supposed that I must have walked nearly the length of the tunnel; and yet it appeared afterward that I was only about half way through it. It seemed like a long day since I had entered. But by and by a faint glimmer of light danced before my eyes; and as I advanced I saw it was the torches of the workmen, and I soon heard their voices. Never were sight and sound more welcome. In a few minutes more, I had joined the party. But I felt quite unmaned for the moment; and I believe, sitting down on the workmen's tool-boxes, I put my hands over my eyes—I really could not help it—and burst into tears.

"I never ventured into a tunnel again without an involuntary thrill of terror coming over me."

The man that "Oh!" for a ledge in some...