

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

A CHARMING STORY.

The Virgin of Van Dyck.

Adapted from the French.

BY ROSE ACTON.

In one of the large saloons of St. James' palace, during the reign of the first James, was assembled a bright group of men and beauty—young fair girls, from whose softly rounded and dimpled cheeks the blush of hope and pleasure had never faded, whose laughing eyes could never have known tears. These were gathered round an open window, looking upon the palace gardens, bending over the tapestried work, then so commonly seen in the delicate fingers of those lifted by rank beyond the cares and concerns of household management; and the bright buds blooming beneath the skillful needles of the fair workmen, seemed all that engrossed their thoughts on that lovely morning; though over their graceful heads had passed enough summers to teach that, however we tread, even among flowers we must encounter thorns. But ah!—there lay the secret, it had been always summer to those light-hearted ones. Each bent laughingly over her task, now and then pausing in expectation of a summons; for the Queen had not yet risen, and the terrible tyranny of court ceremonies had not commenced. Every sunny spot has its shade, and the only shadow cast over that fair scene was the presence of a lady who, by her age and grave dignity, seemed of advanced rank, and in evident recollection of her responsibility and required staidness. This lady was the Grand Duchess D'Alby, first lady in waiting, and guardian and mentor to the young maids of honor gathered around her, waiting Her Majesty's summons to their duties. Of this lovely woman, one was distinguished from her companions, amidst their coquetish adornments, by the studied simplicity of her dress and the quiet thoughtfulness of her fair features; her robe of black velvet fell open, discovering a full white satin petticoat; while deep ruffles falling from the elbows, only allowed a partial glimpse of the small rounded arm; and her only ornament was a little diamond cross, the *souvenir* of a lost and beloved mother; this simple attire was further deepened by a long veil, flung over her dark tresses, and mingling with the folds of her sombre dress.

Dorothea was of one of the noblest Scottish families, and inheritor of its high pride and dignity; Lord Ruthven, her father possessing an escutcheon as famed for its unstained nobility as his vast estates for their extent. A short time before our tale opens, the young Scottish maiden had been brought from her Highland fastnesses to occupy a post of honor near the Queen, for the purpose of completing her education in the accomplishments extant in those days. But one heart had charms for the young student; naturally thoughtful, motherless, and left to the guidance of her own fancies, Dorothea had from childhood loved to make herself friends among the pictured ancestors of her house.—Daily in the large galleries, might be seen a fair young form holding converse, in thought, with the generations passed away; and insensibly the girl's untutored mind began to notice and appreciate, as time passed by the glorious creations of the painter's visionings; and Paul Veronese, Guido, and Rubens, were able masters to the young dreamer; and when youth usurped the place of childhood, the childish fancy deepened to a fervent passion; and Dorothea came into the world to taste its pleasures and experience by the side of royalty, with but one aim and hope in her young, guileless heart; the yearning to achieve a glorious fame in the noble art of which she was a worshipper.

But to return to the morning tasks of the fair group. Ten o'clock struck, and each young head was lifted to the large time-piece, while a chorus of wondering voices was raised in evident surprise at the absence of an expected addition to their circle. Hardly had the echoes died when the door of the saloon was flung open to give entrance to the object of their admiration—the painter Van Dyck. At the announcement of his name there was a general flutter among the pearls and satin robes of the fair girls like the waving of a group of flowers beneath the touch of the evening breeze, and each graceful fold was rearranged on the silken ottomans. The young pupil of Rubens, accustomed as he was to look upon the beautiful among creation, could not refrain a glance of surprise and admiration on suddenly finding himself in the midst of so brilliant a circle. Nor was the involuntary emotion unnoticed by the noble maidens.

The Duchess D'Alby, attributing the young man's embarrassment to the dignified *hautecur* of her greeting, condescended

to relieve him by a polite smile and tone.—'We have been told of your talents, my dear sir, and I suppose truly,' she commenced patronizingly.

'They do me too much honor, Madam. Those who told you this have judged it by the intention; but I have yet done nothing to prove their assertion correct.'

Van Dyck bowed as he spoke, with as much haughtiness as had characterized the question of that noble lady.

Dorothea had felt the proud blood of her land mantle in her cheek during the significant introduction of her mistress; and at the painter's reply, the blush deepened to that of such eager gratification while her dark eyes were raised suddenly to his face—hat the young man noticed the kindly interest, and in his heart blessed her for it.

'Well, well,' continued the Duchess, more gently, 'we shall be able to judge of this for Her Majesty wishes the decorations of the chapel to be renewed; so you will have sufficient motive for exertion. For your winter studio you will be allowed Blafford House; it is an ancient monastery, which you can see from here; you will be quite alone there, and uninterrupted.—And for the summer you will be granted Eltham House. I think the arrangement sufficiently agreeable for the requirements of an artist.'

'My art is a legal talent, Madam, that knows no equal,' replied the artist proudly. 'If I possess it to the height of my ambition the labors which you speak of as beyond a painter's deserts will not suffice to procure materials for my work.'

'That may be, sir,' said the Duchess, softly.—'You are proud, and we are powerful; but, however, let me assure you that these favors are offered on one condition. The Queen nominates you as Court Artist, when you have won the prize offered to the pupils of the Italian school for the Head of the Virgin.'

'Yes, Madam, I know it—know it too well,' replied the young painter, with a half sigh. 'If the Queen's favor can be obtained on this condition alone, it is not for me. I shall not gain the prize.'

'And why not, sir? Do you refuse the honor, or is it that you have no faith in your powers?' And the eyes of the noble inquisitress were bent wonderingly on the suddenly drooping figure of the young man.

'How is it possible, Madam, to represent the features of Our Lady, glorious as they should be? I have no model.' And as he spoke, he fixed his earnest glance on the gentle face of the Scottish maiden. 'I have sought everywhere for the beautiful peace and holy resignation upon an earthly face—and vainly.'

By the same impulse of enthusiasm, the graceful heads of the young girls were raised to the despondent speaker, and for the first time did they acknowledge the attraction of the inspired countenance. Nothing could exceed the brilliant glow of the soul's sunshine on the face of Van Dyck, and nothing could so enhance the beauty and expression as the shade of pensive thoughtfulness then mingling with it. The Duchess was the first to break the spell flung round the listening group. 'And yet, surely you could somewhere find a perfect model.'

'Yes, madame, among those who are exalted as well as beautiful; and even there I have seen but one whose perfection realizes my visionings. Alas! she whom I have found is lost to me; she is a noble lady, who would disdain to sit to a poor artist.'

As he ceased, Van Dyck bent his glowing gaze again on the young Dorothea; while the maiden's unquiet mien and blushing brow betrayed her consciousness of the world's veiled meaning; and on the minds of each of the fair workmen burst the same suspicion, Dorothea was the noble model of the proud young painter's wishes. The Grand Duchess alone was blind to the passing scene; and a greater degree of sympathy blended in her tone as she turned again to the artist.

'And this noble lady—who is she?'

'The Virgin herself, Madam.'

He arose as he spoke, and bent gracefully and gravely, in adieu, casting a glance upon the troubled features of his pictured subject.

'If I gain this prize, Madam,' he murmured as he passed, before the Duchess, 'you will see me again; if not, I shall leave England.'

According to the Queen's arrangement, Van Dyck took possession of Blafford House, situated opposite to the Palace; he was to work out his design for the offered prize, as well as re-decorate the chapel ornaments. Hardly had he been installed in the royal studio, when his pencils were seized to portray the form which had haunted his imagination ever since his interview with the Duchess. Behold the bright figure of the young girl rose before him, his gaze was dim and unsteady, and his hand faltered in its task. A new

feeling, intense in its depth, was struggling in his heart; myriads of vague fancies rose each time he essayed to complete the creation. Alas! for the dreamer! The was passed in struggling to realize his vision; and the night surpassed him, pale and exhausted, by his easel, despondent of success.

And for the young subject of his dreams?—From the moment of the absence of Van Dyck from the Palace, the mockeries, the envious glances, the sarcasms of the fair group were lavished on the drooping head of the young Dorothea without mercy. Before they had separated that night, the slighted beauties had made their gentle companion bitterly rue the chance that had given her the painter's choice. We know not how far the promptings of each of those young van hearts led them, in their dreams; but we do know that after her evening prayer, the last thought in the Scotch maiden's pure and guileless mind was devoted to her fellow-worshipper at the shrine of the most noble of the arts.

It was midnight, the broad shadows of the tall trees in the Palace gardens stood out in bold relief against the moonlit sky, and dewy flowers beneath; while the old abbey walls adjoining the ground—even among their creeping mosses and ivy—glorified in the silver light flung down by night's fair Queen. Midnight yet that silent hour found one of each's denizens sleepless, and unconscious of Time's passing—struggling amidst the sternest of all toil, that of the tearing brain. The hour had come round to find Van Dyck before the unfinished image of his visionings in his monastic studio; there were traces of heavy thought and exhaustion on the painter's features, as he laid down his palette and pencils with a sigh; and in that sigh there was a bitter despair which held the key to his broken murmurings:—'Unlike! unlike! It will be ever thus. I am but striving to preserve a vision that is too dazzling for my poor weak gaze. So it will be. Peace, joy, all love for her; while I—like the poor worshipper that grovels in the dust before his glittering idol—stand here, hoping on, struggling with memory, adorning my distant shrine—unknown, unremembered alone!'

Alone! Pause in thy murmuring, Van Dyck. It is an hour when hearts that know not care or suffering should be beaten with the calm pulse of sleep; and yet other eyes than thine are waking in it. We will leave the dreamer to his inward communing, and pass out again into the moonlit gardens of the Palace. At the moment the painter's sigh ceased through his cloistered studio, and he fancied himself the sole disturber of the night's solitude, a window of the palace was gently opened, and a female form stepped out upon the stone balcony; and, tracing its length, descended the broad steps into the shadow of the tall trees, and, emerging from the ground, paused at the gothic portal of the manse.

It was strange to see that slight figure gliding in that solemn silence, amidst rained stone-work, and tree and shrub, rustling in the night breeze; but the wanderer seemed to be too much engrossed by thought to recollect where she stood. Passing through the porch, she wound her way among the dim aisles of the chapel, and entering one of the galleries, pushed open a half-closed door; and without pausing to observe its occupancy, stood in the lonely studio, looking calmly and gravely upon the drooping form of the young artist, at his task of memory.

For an instant, the young man's cheek paled, as his gaze fell on the motionless form of his mysterious visitor, old forgotten visions of the supernatural rushing across his heated mind. What did she there, breaking upon his midnight vigils? Did not the long veil hide from mortal gaze the features radiant in the purity of a celestial world? While the thought rose in the gaze's heart, his cheek paled; for a vague vision connected the frail form before him with the object of his dreams. And what did it forbid—that silent watch upon his actions?

As if conscious of the communings, the figure advanced from the gloom, and approaching the easel, seated herself silently before it, clinging back the long drapery from her face, as she did so. The gentle rustling of her garments made the only sound to break the dead silence; for the breathing of the painter was inaudible in the bewilderment of that revelation—while the hot blood rushed to his cheek and brow in that sudden revulsion of feeling. Before him, on his vacated couch, rested the form of the Scottish maiden—Dorothea!

All this had been the action of a moment—the next, Van Dyck had fallen on his knees before his beautiful visitant, in gratitude for her remembrance of him. There was a remnant of her noble pride, in the calm gesture of the young girl, as she waved him to his task, and pointed to his scattered pencils. That earnest, passionless gaze recalled the dreamer to himself. The fair face turned towards him, was lighted by so peaceful and guileless a light, that the reality of her presence faded from the ideas of Van Dyck; and the holy vision of the Saviour's mother rose before him again. Bending reverentially before her, as he approached the easel, the artist continued his task with a faltering hand; but the calmness of his fair model communicated itself to him by degrees, as he proceeded; at its close, that midnight hour found not two hearts beating, within the Palace walls, more evenly with inward peace than those drawn together in that silent work. Four hours had passed, and the early morning light fell upon the pale features of the artist as he turned towards his noble model, and laid his palette in silence at her feet. The task was ended; a work of beauty and inspiration, glorious in its majesty, was given to the world, to become hereafter the guiding star to the fame of Van Dyck. A sense of the reality of the passing scene rushed back upon the young man's heart, as he turned to meet the clear, calm gaze of the Scottish maiden; and stretching out his hand imploringly, he stood struggling to frame some expression of wandering gratitude, for the boon thus strangely granted him; but, as if conscious of his intention, Dorothea rose, and drawing round her slight form the folds of her veil, bent a long, earnest look on the noble revelation of the Virgin Mother, and, without word of adieu or explanation of her silence, glided from the chapel, across the Palace grounds, and ascending the stone staircase, disappearing at the window from whence she had emerged.

Alas! for the poor visionary! For a moment he stood watching that form pass from his sight, with the last struggling remnant of his wild hopes; and then overcome with exhaustion and excitement, fell on the vacant couch, he rushed to gaze upon his work; and its glorious beauty struck upon the heart of its creator, all aspiring as were his visionings. A dream of fame, of glorious distinction, rose before him; and then a sudden thought by whose aid he had advanced on that high path of fortune. The painter fell on his knees before his creator, and wildly bursing tears were his acknowledgments.

The close of an hour had brought composure and Van Dyck rose from his couch with a firm step and flushed brow. Who can tell what had been the ponderings of that hour in the teeming brain of the future noble master of imagery? He seated himself before his writing materials, and, with an untrembling hand, traced a few lines; and then, as if fearful of their consideration, hastily securing them with their silken string, went forth from his monastic studio, and among the busy, stirring world. * It was the province of the Grand Duchess D'Almy to open the bills addressed to the noble maiden's under her charge; and that morning one was delivered to her, bearing the name of Lord Ruthven's fair daughter, the young Dorothea. Its perusal afforded the bewildering discovery of the following lines:— 'Tell me if thou art indeed an angel!—Tell me—if thou wouldst not drive me senseless—thou, who hast given me life and hope—wast thou a woman, or an angel of light, that burst upon my sight last night? VAN DYCK. For an instant sat the stately mistress, gazing upon the words, asking question of her outraged dignity, whether the meaning of the missive were not a jest—at the worst, a breach of courtly etiquette. But with the thought, came a sudden recollection of the painter's singular introduction the day before, and a vivid remembrance of the half-veiled sarcasms of the slighted companions of the fair culprit. To decide was to act, and the presence of the young girl was commanded before her inquisitress. Few words of explanation sufficed, and the tale of deception poured into the listeners ear, betrayed the Duchess's cognizance of the scene of the past night. A deep flush overspread the fair cheek of Dorothea, as it was followed by a volley of vituperation from the beautiful lips of her scornful friends; and the large tears stood in her downcast eyes. 'And now your defence,' broke from the quivering lips of the stern mistress. 'Then, and for the first time, the voice of the culprit rose above the murmuring of her accusers.—It is false!'

A momentary silence fell on all that firm denial in the face of proof. The Duchess had expected to have been met with tears and prayers for pardon; and then in her proud dignity, to have cast from her the clinging form of the pleader; but at the defiant tone of the defence—at the overthrow of her pictured exultation—burst forth the fierce fire of the smouldering passion. The story of the deception rang through the palace, calling for judgment on the offender. Each hand held the stone

of accusation gains; the siren supplicant and, ere night the verdict had been given, which was to drive her forth from the side of royalty, to seek shelter beneath the roof of her Highland home.

Another midnight had come around, to bring rest and calm to light hearts, and happy forgetfulness to the care-laden—Dorothea retired to her chamber for the last time; but not unnoticed was she to pass the intervening hours before day. To secure the culprit from a repetition of the secret meeting with the painter, the Duchess had placed a guard at the door of the apartment. The midnight hour struck, and the echoes rang in the heart of more than one listener in the palace. A step approached the apartment of the Duchess, and a hurried summons called her from her sleepless bed. Dorothea had been overheard to pace her room with cautious steps and the window had been gently opened to admit her egress upon the balcony. A moment sufficed to collect the excited watchers for that second act of deception. Flambeaux were procured, and an exulting throng poured forth from the palace gates in pursuit of the truant.—Onwards through the grounds—among flowers—rushing beneath the tall trees, the hostile band followed the track of the fugitive—neared the manse—passed noiselessly across the portal, and burst into the chapel, confronting the painter at his silent task; the veiled maiden seated before him. The vivid light, the tramp of many feet, startled the former from his visionings and recalled him to earth. Upon the beautiful truant the effect was more startling; springing from the couch, her hands clasping her fair brow, her eyes lighted by wild terror, a cry of intense fear broke from her lips. At the sound, all rushed to gaze upon the convulsed features; while the truth burst simultaneously on each heart in that revelation, teaching a lesson of repentance for the past of tyranny and distrust; calling up, in many long dormant feelings of human kindness.—'They looked on a somnambulist! Thus had she been led in her dreams to become the inspiration of the unconscious painter—thus led him onward in his path of fame. And need it be told that his creation won for him the yearned for prize; and far more, laid the foundation of his greatness. What need it be told that, a few months from the passing of these scenes, there was celebrated the marriage of the painter Van Dyck, and Dorothea, the beautiful 'Virgin' of his dreams, among her highland fastnesses!

A Bit of Romance.

An English paper has the following story:—A strange statement is afloat in the gossiping circles—it is that a beautiful English widow of great wealth is dying of love for Blanqui, the famous conspirator. Before he got himself engaged up for the affair of the 15th of May, Blanqui used to preside over a debating club held in the Conservatoire. To this club the lady went; and the gaunt looks, wild energy and indescribable fascination which the man exercises over all who approach him, went straight to the unoccupied heart of the Englishwoman. She became a regular attendant at the club, in the hope of attracting the attention of the arch-conspirator. But Blanqui noticed her not—bright eyes had no charm for him. To excite his interest she sent him a bouquet, and another and another; but the conspirator threw them away with a contemptuous 'pshaw!' and never even condescended to inquire from whence they came. With woman's usual perversity, the more she was slighted the more she became smitten; and with woman's usual ingenuity she at length after many efforts, succeeded without any violation of decorum, in getting introduced to Blanqui, and even in persuading him to appear at her table, though he would not accept any thing else than a lump of bread, a few lettuce leaves and a glass of water—his only food. The man is a thorough Spartan. And when at last he was replaced in dungeon in which he has passed so many years of his life, she paid him every attention she possibly could.—During his trial at Bourges she was there; and now that he is cooped up again for many years to come, she is his principal correspondent, and even, it is said, entertains hopes of becoming his wife.

'SHE BEARS.'—The principal of an Academy, in an advertisement, mentioned his female assistant, and the 'reputation for teaching which she bears; but the printer—careless fellow—left out the 'which'—so the advertisement went forth, commending the lady's reputation for 'teaching she bears.'

OPULENCE.—A rich officer of revenue one day asked a man of wit, what sort of a thing opulence was?

'It is a thing,' replied the philosopher, 'which can give a rascal the advantage over an honest man.'

The Women of Hungary.

Patriotism and true love of country, are the great characteristics of the noble matrons of Hungary. Ladies of the highest rank, as well as those of the humblest origin, all mingled together in a maternal bond of alliance, stand forth as the encouragers of the martyrs of the republic. The young Countess Csaky has been foremost in the bloody struggle; she raised a regiment of volunteers at her own expense, and is actually in command of it. The adjutant is also a lady of rank, and is her sister.—'They dress in the uniform of officers—Hungarian jacket, blue pantaloons, and a large sword at their side. Watch-fires surround their tent, and sentinels keep guard throughout the night. Before the Countess retires for the night, she writes despatches to all her officers, giving them orders, and if any spy brings a report of an advance of the enemy, she is at once at the head of her divisions. With the most wonderful talent, she lays the plans for the surprise of her enemy. To the discomfiture of the foe, her commands are carried out confidently and strictly. The animated patriotism of this noble woman inspires such enthusiasm amongst the soldiers, that each one becomes a hero in his courageous desire to outdo in deeds of daring, his compatriot. The skill in manœuvring displayed by these heroic women is wonderful, and in many instances the enemy have surrendered without a blow. Not the less efficient are many other ladies who are not quite so famous in arms; every where the angelic presence of the women is visible, saving the soldiers from the jaws of death.—*European American.*

Sick to your Business.

If you have set up in business, but do not succeed as well as you anticipated, be not anxious to change. Sick to your business, and the long run, you will have no reason to regret it. Call to mind the rich and successful men of your acquaintance, and you will find they all commenced business and stuck to it—year in and year out—in dull times as well as in prosperous ones. The changing—be uneasy—never seem to get ahead, but are forever in the lags. It is difficult to find a man who has pursued a regular business for a dozen years, who has not prospered and made money. He may have lost it again, by bad debts or endorsements, or speculations, but in business he was pro p rous. To you, young man, we would say, stick to your business. Be not easily persuaded to make a change, no matter how golden the prospects held out to you. You are sure and safe where you are. In another situation, you may be ruined.—Thousands may have failed by a change, where a score have made their fortune.

There is no danger, if you stick to your business, are economical, and do not credit too much. Credit is the ruin of hundreds. At least ten per cent. of all you sell on credit you may put down as lost. Before you thus venture trust for your goods, it will be well to count the cost. By prudence and industry—by a careful look out—by being constant at your business, we see no reason why you may not calculate upon success. We are sure you will not fail, while you attend to your own affairs, and let speculations and wild schemes alone.

Pat's Notion of the Future State.

It is to be apprehended that the notions of many in Christendom are not a great deal more just, or elevated than appears in the following case which occurred on the frontiers of Maine, between Jimmy McGee and Pat McGarlin.

Pat being called to visit his neighbor Jimmy McGee, and hear his last words of farewell before shuffling off this mortal coil, he donned his best suit of clothes, smoothing his usual cheerful phiz, into unusual gravity, and made his appearance at the bedside of his old friend. Upon meeting him Pat exclaimed:—

'Well Jimmy I understand the doctors have given you up.'

Jim—'Yes Pat, it's over wid me.'

Pat—(after a pause) 'Well Jimmy, ye haven't been a great sinner,—ye'll go to the good place.'

Jim—'Oh yes, Pat—to be sure I stole some of the government timber.'

Pat—(taking Jimmy's hand and assuming a diplomatic air) 'Well, farewell to ye; when ye reaches the good place tell them ye're well acquainted wid Pat McGarlin.'

Here Pat started for the door, but as if suddenly thinking of Jimmy's dishonesty in stealing the government timber he wheeled around to his friend, and seriously and earnestly exclaimed—

'But Jimmy, if anything happens to ye that ye should go to the other place, just tell them ye don't know devil a word about me.'

The harvest in Canada is favorably spoken of by the *Toronto Globe*.