



THE TIMES.

An Independent Family Newspaper,
 IS PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY BY
F. MORTIMER & CO.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE.
 (WITHIN THE COUNTY.)

One Year, \$1 25
 Six Months, \$0 75

(OUT OF THE COUNTY.)

One Year, (Postage included) \$1 50
 Six Months, (Postage included) \$0 85

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Select Poetry.

THE BEAUTY OF OLD AGE.

I often think each tottering form
 That limps along in life's decline
 Once bore a heart as young, as warm,
 As full of idle faults as mine!
 And each has had its dream of joy,
 Its own unequalled, pure romance,
 Commencing when the blushing boy
 First thrilled at lovely woman's glance.

And each could tell his tale of youth,
 Would think its scenes of love vain
 More passion, more unearthly truth
 Than any tale before or since.
 Yes! they could tell of tender lays,
 At midnight penned in classic shades,
 Of days more bright than modern days —
 And maids more fair than modern maids.

Of whispers in a willing ear;
 Of kisses on a blushing cheek,
 Each kiss, each whisper far too dear
 Our modern lips to give or speak.
 Of passions too untimely crossed —
 Of passions slighted or betrayed —
 Of kindred spirits early lost,
 And buds that blossomed but to fade.

Of beaming eyes and tresses gay,
 Elastic form and noble brow,
 And forms that have all passed away,
 And left them what we see them now.
 And it is thus — is human love
 So very light and frail a thing?
 And must youth's brightest vision move
 Forever on Time's restless wing?

Must all the eyes that still are bright,
 And all the lips that talk of bliss,
 And all the forms so fair to sight,
 Hereafter only come to this?
 Then what are all earth's treasures worth,
 If we must at length lose them thus—
 If all we value most on earth
 Ere long must fade away from us?

A WOMAN'S ADVENTURES.

"THERE is a destiny which shapes
 your end; and I am a firm believer
 in it, for how else can I explain my
 adventures and their results while traveling
 in Austria in the year of the Welt-
 Ausstellung at Vienna?"

As is usual with a novice in European
 travel, I received during the week prior
 to sailing the ordinary amount of advice
 as to what I should and should not do.
 Meantime, my aunt Edith, who had
 spent a year in Europe ten or twelve
 years before, rather surprised me by her
 reticence in regard to my proposed
 voyage. However, the night before I was
 to sail I suggested to her that she might
 be able to give me some valuable advice
 as she had probably not "forgotten how
 one should behave in Paris."

"Forgotten!" she exclaimed with a
 start, and then, raven-like, "nothing
 more." I played with the tassel of the
 window curtain and wondered how I
 should ever get on without this aunt, the
 dearest, bravest and handsomest woman
 in all the world—to me. She was thirty-
 six years old, just ten years older
 than myself, for by a happy coincidence
 our birthdays fell in the same month,
 and upon the same day of the month,
 the twenty-fifth of August.

Aunt Edith was a great comfort to the
 maiden sisterhood. Spinners referred to
 Edith Mack with a sense of triumph
 whenever any disrespectful allusions
 were cast upon "old maids." She was
 always bright, charming and witty, and
 people wondered, like so many idiots,
 why she had never married, instead of
 wondering why most other women did.
 When questioned about it, which was
 rarely, she usually replied that she never
 "had the time," or that she awaited
 her "kind over the seas"—some such
betise. But to me the fact that she had
 never married was never a matter for
 wonder; she had never loved, I supposed,

which was reason enough. She had
 her work in life—had written two very
 delightful books, made occasional illustrations
 for publishers, and played German
 music a *ra-vo*. At length she
 spoke, this Aunt Edith.

"Yes," my dear niece, I have some
 advice to give you," she said in a low
 voice; "don't fall in love with a European."

"Do you think there is any danger?" I asked with mock seriousness.

"Not with a Frenchman or German," she quickly replied. "But let me tell you my experience. I was not far from your age when I went to Europe with Cousin Helen. I had just refused an offer of marriage from a very noble fellow because I could not love him. He lacked the power to control me; I felt myself the stronger of the two. Not that women like to be ruled, but that they like that power in men which can rule if need be, generously, but never despotically. I had only in my imagination a conception of that love 'which passeth understanding'—which lifts a woman out of herself into a willing sacrifice that looks to calmer eyes as the height of folly. I liked men well, but none had ever stirred more than the even surface of my feelings, and I so firmly believed that no one ever could as to regard my 'falling in love' as most improbable. I really desired the experience, feeling that something is lost out of life if every phase of human feeling and emotion be not awakened. But I went to Europe, and walked straight into my fate."

"The day after my arrival in Paris, in passing through the court of the hotel where I was stopping, I encountered a gentleman who lifted his hat, and who looked at me in a manner that caused me to observe his eyes, which were large, black and exceptionally splendid. In figure he was tall and firmly built, an aquiline nose and clearly cut chin giving a high-bred look to his face, and he wore some sort of a decoration which caught Helen's notice. At the table-d'hôte that evening I found myself seated next to him. Our table talk, begun early in the meal, was the beginning of an acquaintance that developed into that strongest of affections which makes slaves of us all. I never forgot my proud birthright and well understood the danger of a European alliance—or mesalliance. The gentleman was quite Oriental, belonging to that country which has Bucharest for its capital. His family was of high distinction, connected with that of the reigning prince. He possessed a modest fortune, had been educated in Athens and Paris, and spoke four or five languages. He was ardent, jealous, passionate, but possessed a heart at once so loving, so full of every tender and winning quality, that it was easy to forgive outbursts of feeling and similar offences. He had spent some time in England, without, however, learning to speak much of the language. The history of his past life, as he related it to us, was quite in keeping with his character as a man. He had been affianced when quite young to a beautiful girl, quarrelled with her broke off the engagement, then joined the Greek army, fought against the Turks, and was four times wounded."

"It was early in June when we arrived in Paris, and at the occurrence of my birthday in August we had become very well acquainted, as also with a number of his friends to whom he introduced us. Wishing to observe my *fete*, he sent me a tiny bouquet—a rose and some sprays of fragrant flowers. In the evening he begged for some souvenir of the day, when I declared I had nothing to give.

"Then I shall take something," he replied, and clipped from a curl a ring of my hair, which he placed in a locket attached to his watchguard, in the back of which he previously made a note of the day.

"That will remain there for ever," he remarked.

"Which means six months, at the end of which time you will have forgotten me," I replied.

"Not at the end of six months, six years, nor six ages," he warmly retorted.

"As the autumn months wore away, and he began to talk to me of marriage, the seriousness of his love frightened me, and it was not until I was assured by what seemed unmistakable proofs that all his statements in regard to himself were true that I in any sense considered

the question of marriage with him. To be obliged always to talk French or Italian was not to my liking, and to marry anybody but a compatriot seemed very unpatriotic. But I loved him, and that was the solution of the whole matter. His kindness to us was without limit, and tendered in the most graceful and grateful manner. He knew some excellent English families who were living in Paris, whose acquaintance we afterward made, and who spoke of him in the highest terms of esteem.

"As the winter set in, Helen and I arranged to go to Italy. My friend was to take advantage of our departure to go to his 'provincial estates' on business, and afterward to join us in Italy. He gave us a letter to the Greek consul at Rome, a friend of his, to whose care he would confide his letters, and who, he thought, might be of real service to us notwithstanding our own ambassadorial corps there.

"My separation from him proved to me in a thousand-fold manner how deep and strong was the bond that bound me to him. We had scarcely more than become well settled in Rome than a letter arrived which he had mailed at Vienna and which the polite consul came and delivered in person. And what a letter it was!—only a page or two, but words alive with the love and passion of his heart. And that was the last letter, as it was the first, that I ever received from him. The cause of his silence none of us could tell. He knew that a letter sent to me in care of any one of the American consuls in Paris or in Italy would reach me. As the mystery of his silence deepened the attentions of the consul became more assiduous. For some reason I did not like the man, although he was very kind and gentlemanly. Once he lightly remarked that doubtless 'our friend had been *ephris* by some fair Austrian blood,' and the suggestion filled me with shame. Who knew but it might be true—that the man fell in love with every pretty new face—for mine was called beautiful then—and that after an entertaining season of flirtation he had bid me adieu? Of course I blamed myself for having been so confiding as to be deceived by a handsome adventurer without principle or honor. I cannot tell you what agony I suffered. I begged Helen to go on to Naples, for Rome had become very hateful to me. But at Naples, as you know, Helen fell ill with the Roman fever, and died, and I returned to Rome to bury her body there in the Protestant cemetery. Four months had gone by, and not a word from my friend. Alone as I was, my troubles drove me nearly frantic. I returned to Paris. That I was so sad and changed seemed naturally due to Helen's death; nobody suspected that I was the victim of a keener sorrow. None of his friends had received news of him. I was too proud to show that my interest in him had been of more than ordinary meaning. Nobody knew of my love for him but Helen, and the secret was buried in her grave."

ella, although she was anything but saintly.

Late in the following winter we left Paris and went to Nice, where "the romance of a serviette" began; and I trust the reader will not question my truthfulness when I observe that what I am writing is, without exaggeration, strictly true.

St. Cecilia, from nervousness brought on by drinking strong tea (as I firmly believe,) kept a small night lamp burning in her room at night, so she should not be afraid to sleep. For this purpose she used tiny tapers, which float on the top of oil poured in a tumbler half full of water. We breakfasted in our own rooms, and the breakfast napkins of the Grand Hotel, where we were stopping, were decidedly shabby and only about six inches square. On the morning of our leave-taking from Nice, St. Cecilia wanted a "rag" to tie over her bottle of oil, which she carried with her for her night-tapers, and cast her eyes about for one; she seized upon the raggedest of the serviettes.

"I don't consider this *stealing*, *ma chere*," she murmured in apology. "My bill is enormous! I feel that I've paid for this rag twice over."

So the serviette went with us by sea to Naples. There we were obliged for a time to occupy the same apartment, and the napkin taken off the bottle was lying about the room, for it was warm and there was no fire to throw it in. Tucking it away with soiled linen, it came from the laundry clean and white, save one round oil-spot on it, and was thrown into my trunk along with the refreshed linen; and there it remained untouched until four months later, when I arrived at Vienna.

At Venice, Cecilia was obliged to return to Paris; she was to rejoin me a fortnight later at Vienna. Meantime, a young English-woman, Kate Barton, whose acquaintance we had made at Rome, was going to Vienna to join a party of cousins; and as we were both alone, we arranged to make the journey together. Kate was one of the merriest of English girls (a native, however, of Cape Town,) a tall, rosy-cheeked blonde, with a half dozen brothers distributed in the British army and provincial parliaments.

We left Venice at midnight in an Adriatic steamer, and arrived next morning at Trieste, a town which during our forced stay in it of forty-eight hours filled my mind with nothing but most disagreeable souvenirs. Life there was in complete contrast to the quiet, poetic, graceful existence at Venice, and the change from the one to the other had been so sudden as to act like a stunning blow. A detention caused by illness and the loss of a train through the purposed maliciousness of a hotel-waiter led to two results. One was our sending a telegram to the proprietor of the W— Hotel in Vienna to inform him of the delay, as rooms had been engaged for us by a gentleman who was in the habit of lodging in that hotel when in Vienna, and who before leaving the city had shown the kind thoughtfulness of sending us a letter of introduction to the proprietor commending us to his courtesy. The other result was to bring about an acquaintance with a Prussian, Herr Schwager, which happened in this wise; Kate, whose wrath was fully aroused at the troubles we encountered in Trieste, was extravagant in her denunciations of those "horrid Germans" after we were once fairly seated in the cars bound for Gratz. Neither of us spoke German with any degree of ease or much intelligence, and consequently gave vent to our opinions in plain English. A young man of a studious, gentlemanly appearance, but of unmistakable Teutonic descent, sat in one corner of the compartment, and from his frequent smiling at our talk I concluded that he understood English, and made bold to ask him if he did.

"Happily, I do," he replied, his handsome brown eyes twinkling with increased merriment, "and I am one of those 'horrid Germans.'"

His reply greatly amused Miss Barton and opened the way to a very animated conversation, in which we learned that he had just come from Italy, had been on the same steamer as ourselves coming from Venice, and had stopped in the same hotel and suffered the same agonies. Then we talked of what we liked best in

Italy, and he spoke of an American friend, Mr. Fanton, with whom he had greatly enjoyed Rome. The fact that he was a friend of John Fanton, whom I had known for years, and who was the last to bid me good-bye in Rome, was recommendation enough for any stranger, and constituted us friends at once. I forgot all about Aunt Edith's advice to have "nothing to do with foreigners," but placed at once the most unlimited confidence in Herr Schwager, who from the beginning of our acquaintance attached himself in a most brotherly way to our fortunes, proving himself in every particular a rare honor to his sex. However gross and brusque the German character may be, I must for ever make an exception of our Herr, whose genuine politeness, delicacy of kindness, refinement and manliness I have rarely seen equalled and never excelled.

Kate kept up her banter about the "horrid Germans," for which she had abundant reason in our journey from Gratz to Vienna. We had hoped to have a compartment to ourselves, to which end Herr Schwager, had expended a florin; but at the last moment a portly Gratzian entered and settled himself by one of the windows which would command the Semmering Pass. He too spoke some English, and endeavored to be sociable. As we neared the pass he insisted upon my taking his seat the better to see the marvellous scenery, with which he was already familiar. I had been too long on the Continent not to have become suspicious of a voluntary sacrifice on the part of a European. It invariably means something; it covers an *arriere pensee*. He offers you a paper to read or a peach or a pear to eat, or buys a bouquet of flowers at a station, and if you accept the proffer of either he takes advantage of the obligation under which he has placed you and proceeds generally to smoke, remarking for form's sake that he "hopes it is not offensive," while you, under the burden of his kindness, smile a fashionable lie, and reply, "Not in the least." So our Gratzian withdrew to the farther end of the seat and began to smoke a most villainous cigar, and continued to smoke, lighting another when one was finished. I soon began to succumb to the poisonous effects of the close atmosphere, for, although we kept our windows open—it was the middle of June—the Gratzian with true German caution kept his firmly closed. But the effect upon Kate was even worse, and her pallid face plainly told how much she was suffering. We cast entreaty looks upon Herr Schwager, who never smoked, but understood our annoyance without knowing just how to ask the Gratzian to cease. We poked our heads out of the window, opened cologne-bottles and indulged in various manifestations of disgust; but to no purpose; the Austrian smoked on. Finally, when he began on the fourth cigar, Kate, whose patience was utterly exhausted, begged me to ask him to stop. I naturally demurred, being under obligation to him, and replied, "you're the sicker, Kate; you tell him."

When suddenly she lifted her pale face and shouted at him, "Oh, you horrid German! we are nearly smoked to death! For mercy's sake, stop!"

"Ah, pardon!" he replied unconcernedly, taking the cigar from his mouth and putting it in his pocket.

Herr Schwager's amusement was boundless, and our satisfaction also, as we had no more smoke on the road to Vienna.

The landlord of the Hotel W—, to whom we were recommended, received us with a pleasant cordiality, and at the same time apologized because he could not give us the rooms engaged for us until the next day; so we were temporarily lodged in a large room leading from an ante-room designed for a servant—an arrangement which is common in Austrian hotels. On the following morning, as Kate was waiting half dressed in the ante-room for the *kammer-madchen* to bring her warm water, who should walk in upon her, *sans ceremonie*, but a long, black-gowned priest! He stared at her, nonchalantly looked about the room, and walked out with never a word. She might have regarded the intrusion as a mistake if a like visit from the same personage had not been made at the same hour next morning in our own rooms, to which we were that day transferred. The two successive