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PROPRIETOR

TRANSFER

IN LETTERS OF GOLD.

Full fifty years, sweet love, together
We wandered on 'gainst wind and weather;
Beneath love's fond, impulsive sway,
It seemed but like a single day.

Not quite a week the grasses wave,
Dear heart, upon thy hillside grave—
And yet a thousand years to be
It seems since thou art gone from me.
—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

OLD AESON.

Judge between me and my guest, the stranger within my gates, the man whom in his extremity I clothed and fed.

I remember well the time of his coming, for it happened at the end of five days and nights during which the year passed from strength to age; in the interval between the swallow's departure and the redwing's coming; when the tortoise in my garden crept into his winter quarters and the equinox was on us, with an east wind that parched the blood in the trees, so that their leaves for once knew no gradations of red and yellow, but turned at a stroke to brown and crackled like tin foil.

At 5 o'clock in the morning of the sixth day I looked out. The wind still whistled across the sky, but now without the obstruction of any cloud. Full in front of my window Sirius flashed with a whiteness that pierced the eye. A little to the right the whole constellation of Orion was suspended clear over a wedge-like gap in the coast, wherein the sea could be guessed rather than seen, and traveling yet farther the eye fell on two brilliant lights, the one set high above the other; the one steady and a fiery red, the other yellow and blazing intermittently; the one Aldebaran, the other revolving on the lighthouse top, fifteen miles away.

Half way up the east, the moon, now in her last quarter and decrepit, climbed with the dawn close at her heels. At this hour they brought in the stranger, asking if my pleasure were to give him clothing and hospitality.

Nobody knew whence he came, except that it was from the wind and the night, seeing that he spoke in a strange tongue, moaning and making a sound like the twittering of birds in a chimney. But his journey must have been long and painful, for his legs bent under him, and he could not stand when they lifted him.

So, finding it useless to question him for the time, I learned from the servants all they had to tell—namely, that they had come upon him but a few minutes before, lying on his face within my grounds without staff or scrip, bare-headed, spent and crying feebly for succor in his foreign tongue, and in pity they had carried him in and brought him to me.

Now for the look of this man. He seemed a century old, being bald, extremely wrinkled, with wide hollows where the teeth should be, and the flesh hanging loose and flaccid on his cheekbones; and what color he had could have come only from exposure to that bitter night. But his eyes chiefly spoke of his extreme age. They were blue and deep, and filled with the wisdom of years, and when he turned them in my direction they appeared to look through me, beyond me and back upon centuries of sorrow and the slow endurance of man, as if his immediate misfortunes were but an inconsiderable item in a long list.

They frightened me. Perhaps they conveyed a warning of that which I was to endure at their owner's hands. From compassion I ordered the servants to take him to my wife, with word that I wished her to set food before him and see that it passed his lips.

So much I did for this stranger. Now learn how he rewarded me.

He has taken my youth from me, and the most of my substance, and the love of my wife.

From the hour when he tasted food in my house he sat there without hint of going. Whether from design, or because age and his sufferings had really palsied him, he came back tediously to life and warmth, nor for many days professed himself able to stand erect. Meanwhile he lived on the best of our hospitality. My wife tended him, and my servants ran at his bidding, for he managed early to make them understand scraps of his language, though slow in acquiring hours—I believe out of calculation, lest some one should inquire his business (which was a mystery) or hint at his departure.

I myself often visited the room he had appropriated, and would sit for an hour watching those fathomless eyes while I tried to make head or tail of his discourse. When we were alone my wife and I used to speculate at times on his probable profession. Was he a merchant, an aged mariner, tinker, tailor, beggarman, thief? We could never decide, and he never disclosed.

Then the awakening came. I sat one day in the chair beside his, wondering as usual. I had felt heavy of late with a soreness and languor in my bones, as if a dead weight hung continually on my shoulders and another rested on my heart.

A warmer color in the stranger's cheek caught my attention, and I bent forward, peering under the pendulous lids. His eyes were livelier and less profound. The melancholy was passing from them as breath fades off a pane of glass. He was growing younger. Starting up I ran across the room to the mirror.

There were two white hairs in my forelock, and at the corner of either eye half a dozen radiating lines. I was an old man.

Turning, I regarded the stranger. He sat as phlegmatic as an Indian idol, and in my fancy I felt the young blood draining from my own heart and saw it mantling in his cheeks. Minute by minute I watched the slow miracle—the old man beautified. As buds unfold he put on a lovely youthfulness, and drop by drop left me winter.

I hurried from the room, and seeking my wife laid the case before her. "This is a ghoul," I said, "that we harbor; he is sucking my best blood, and the household is clean bewitched." She laid aside the book in which she read and laughed at me. Now my wife was well looking,

and her eyes were the light of my soul. Consider, then, how I felt as she laughed, taking the stranger's part against me. When I left her it was with a new suspicion in my heart. "How shall it be," I thought, "if after stealing my youth he go on to take the one thing that is better?"

In my room, day by day, I brooded upon this—hating my own alteration and fearing worse. With the stranger there was no longer any disguise. His head blossomed in curls; white teeth filled the hollows of his mouth; the pits in his cheeks were heaped full with roses, glowing under a transparent skin. It was Aeson renewed and thankless, and he sat on, devouring my substance.

Now having probed my weakness, and being satisfied that I no longer dared to turn him out, he, who had half imposed his native tongue upon us, constraining the household to a hideous jargon, the bastard growth of two languages, condescended to jerk us back rudely into our own speech once more, mastering it with a readiness that proved his former dissimulation and using it henceforward as the sole vehicle of his wishes. On his past life he remained silent, but took occasion to confide in me that he proposed embracing a military career as soon as he should tire of the shelter of my roof.

And I groaned in my chamber, for that which I feared had come to pass. He was making open love to my wife. And the eyes with which he looked at her and the lips with which he coaxed her had been mine, and I was an old man. Judge now between me and this guest.

One morning I went to my wife, for the burden was past bearing, and I must satisfy myself. I found her tending the plants on her window ledge, and when she turned I saw that years had not taken from her comeliness one jot. And I was old.

So I taxed her on the matter of this stranger, saying this and that, and how I had cause to believe he loved her.

"That is beyond doubt," she answered and smiled.

"By my head, I believe his fancy is returned!" I blurted out.

And her smile grew radiant as, looking me in the face, she answered, "By my soul, husband, it is."

Then I went from her down into my garden, where the day grew hot and the flowers were beginning to droop. I stared upon them and could find no solution to the problem that worked in my heart. And then I glanced up, eastward, to the sun above the privet hedge and saw him coming across the flower beds, treading them down in wantonness. He came with a light step and a smile, and I waited for him, leaning heavily on my stick.

"Give me your watch!" he called out as he drew near.

"Why should I give you my watch?" I asked, while something worked in my throat.

"Because I wish it; because it is gold, because you are too old and won't want it much longer."

"Take it," I cried, pulling the watch out and thrusting it into his hand.

"Take it—you who have taken all that is better! Strip me, spoil me!"

A soft laugh sounded above, and I turned. My wife was looking down on us from the window, and her eyes were both moist and glad.

"Pardon me," she said; "it is you who are spoiling the child."—Arthur T. Quiller-Couch in Noughts and Crosses.

Some Famous Dunces.

Literary history is crowded with instances of torpid and uninteresting boyhood. Gibbon was pronounced "dreadfully dull," and the utmost that was predicted of Hume in his youth was that "he might possibly become a steady merchant." Adam Clarke, afterward so deeply skilled in oriental languages and antiquities, was pronounced by his father to be "a grievous dunce," and of Boileau, who became a model for Pope, it was said that he was a youth of little understanding. Dryden was "a great numskull," who went through a course of education at Westminster, but the "stimulating properties of Dr. Busby's classical ferrule were thrown away upon the drone who was to be known as "Glorious John."—London Standard.

One of Grant's Pictures.

The original picture of "Sheridan's Ride," painted by T. Buchanan Read, now hangs in the private office of President Thomas L. James, of the Lincoln bank. It is about five by four feet in dimensions, and is especially notable for spirited figure of the horse upon which Sheridan is mounted. The picture is the property of Mrs. U. S. Grant, and was sent to the Lincoln storage warehouse pending some alterations in the Grant residence. It was purchased from the artist by a few western men and presented to General Grant soon after the close of the war.—New York Times.

Tracheotomy Advocated.

Some of the most experienced practitioners express the opinion that the expected fact that intubation would, on account of its simplicity, take the place of the knife and add materially to the resources of the profession, has not been fulfilled. It is urged by those who take this ground that the operation necessitates a degree of manual dexterity which the average physician, with his few opportunities, is not able to acquire, and the objection made is that the patient is subjected to a certain amount of exhaustion which can be ill borne in one suffering from diphtheria.—New York Tribune.

The Influence of Politicians.

When one, not being a professional politician, looks at the question widely and considers the penalties of political greatness, one begins to wonder whether politics have that influence on the real life of a nation which they are supposed to have, and whether eminent politicians are not merely the puppets of the hour. But that is a question on which the fates forbid that we should enter! Probably in no case are the penalties of greatness so irksome as in the case of the eminent politician.—All the Year Round.

IN TENEBRIS.

I heard her song
Low in the night
From out her casement steal away,
Nor thought it wrong
To steal a sight
Of her—and lo! she knelt to pray.

I heard her say:
"Forgive him, Lord!
Such as he seems he cannot be."
I turned away,
Myself abhorred—
She prayed—and lo! she prayed for me.
—T. W. Hall in Munsey's Magazine.

NERVE.

While Murat was in Madrid he was anxious to communicate with Junot in Portugal, but all the roads to Lisbon swarmed with guerrillas and with the troops composing Castanos' army.

He asked Krasinski, the commandant of the lancers, to find him a brave and intelligent young man. Two days afterward the commandant brought the prince a young man of his corps, for whom he pledged his life. His name was Leckinski, and he was but eighteen years old.

Murat was moved at seeing so young a man court so imminent a danger, for if he were detected his doom was sealed. Murat could not help remarking to the Pole the risk he was about to run. The youth smiled.

"Let your imperial highness give me my instructions," answered he respectfully, "and I will give a good account of the mission I have been honored with."

The young prince augured favorably from the young man's modest resolution. The Russian ambassador gave him his dispatches; he put on a Russian uniform and set out for Portugal.

The first two days passed over quietly, but on the afternoon of the third Leckinski was surrounded by a body of Spaniards, who disarmed him and dragged him before their commanding officer. Luckily for the gallant youth it was Castanos himself.

Leckinski was aware that he was lost if he were discovered to be a Frenchman; consequently he determined on the instant not to let a single word of Russian escape him, and to speak but Russian and German, which he spoke with equal fluency. The cries of rage of his captors announced the fate which awaited him, and the horrible murder of General Rene, who had perished in the most dreadful tortures but a few weeks before as he was going to join Junot, was sufficient to freeze the very blood.

"Who are you?" said Castanos in French, which language he spoke perfectly well, having been educated in France.

Leckinski looked at the questioner, made a sign and answered in German, "I do not understand you."

Castanos spoke German, but he did not wish to appear personally in the matter and summoned one of the officers of his staff, who went on with the examination. The young Pole answered in Russian or German, but never let a single syllable of French escape him. He might, however, easily have forgotten himself, surrounded as he was by a crowd eager for his blood, and who waited with savage impatience to have him declared guilty—that is, a Frenchman—to fall upon him and murder him.

But their fury was raised to a height which the general himself could not control, by an incident which seemed to cut off the unhappy prisoner from every hope of escape. One of Castanos' aids de camp, one of the fanatically patriotic who were so numerous in this war, and who from the first had denounced Leckinski as a French spy, burst in the room, dragging with him a man wearing the brown jacket, tall hat and red plume of a Spanish peasant.

The officer confronted him with the Pole and said:

"Look at this man, and then say if it is true that he is a German or a Russian. He is a spy, I swear by my soul."

The peasant meanwhile was eying the prisoner closely. Presently his dark eyes lighted up with the fire of hatred.

"Es Frances, he is a Frenchman!" exclaimed he, clapping his hands. And he stated that having been in Madrid a few weeks before he had been put in requisition to carry forage to the French barracks, and, said he, "I recollect that this is the man who took my load of forage and gave me a receipt. I was near him an hour and recollect him. When we caught him I told my comrade this is the French officer I delivered my forage to."

This was correct. Castanos probably discovered the true state of the case, but he was a generous foe. He proposed to let him pursue his journey, for Leckinski still insisted he was a Russian, and could not be made to understand a word of French. But the moment he ventured a hint of the kind, a thousand threatening voices were raised against him and he saw that clemency was impossible.

"But," said he, "will you then risk a quarrel with Russia, whose neutrality we are so anxiously asking for?"

"No," said the officer, "but let us try this man."

Leckinski understood all, for he was acquainted with Spanish. He was removed and thrown into a room worthy to have been one of the dungeons of the inquisition in its best days.

When the Spaniards took him prisoner he had eaten nothing since the previous evening, and when his dungeon door was closed on him he had fasted for eighteen hours. No wonder then what with exhaustion, fatigue, anxiety, and the agony of his dreadful situation, that the unhappy prisoner fell almost senseless on his hard couch. Night soon closed in and left him to realize in its gloom the full horror of his hopeless situation. He was brave, of course, but to die at eighteen—his sudden. But youth and fatigue finally yielded to the approach of sleep and he was soon buried in profound slumber.

oner's couch, the hand that shaded the lamp touched him on the shoulder, and a sweet and silvery voice—a woman's voice—asked him, "Do you want eat?"

The young Pole, awakened suddenly by the glare of the lamp, by the touch and words of the female, rose up on his couch and with eyes only half opened said in German, "What do you want?"

"Give the man something to eat at once," said Castanos, when he heard the result of the first experiment, "and let him go. He is not a Frenchman. How could he have been so far master of himself? The thing is impossible."

But though Leckinski was supplied with food he was detained a prisoner. The next morning he was taken to a spot where he could see the mutilated corpse of the Frenchman, who had been cruelly massacred by the peasantry of Truxillo, and he was threatened with the same death. But the noble youth had promised not to fail, and not a word, not an accent, not a gesture or look betrayed him.

Leckinski, when taken back to his prison, hailed it with a sort of joy. For twelve hours he had had nothing but gibbets and death in its most horrid forms before his eyes—exhibited to him by men with the looks and the passions of demons. He slept, however, after the harassing excitement of the day, and soundly, too, when in the midst of his deep and deathlike slumbers the door opened gently, some one drew near his couch, and the same voice whispered in his ear:

"Arise and come with me. We wish to save your life. Your horse is ready."

And the brave young man, hastily awakened by the words, "We wish to save your life; come," answered still in German, "What do you want?"

Castanos, when he heard of this experiment and its result, said the Russian was a noble young man; he saw the true state of the case.

The next morning early four men came to take him before a sort of court martial, composed of officers of Castanos' staff. During the walk they uttered the most horrible threats against him, but true to his determination he pretended not to understand them.

When he came before his judges he seemed to gather what was going on from the arrangements of the tribunal and not from what he heard said around him, and he asked in German where his interpreter was? He was sent for, and the examination commenced.

It turned at first upon the motive of his journey from Madrid to Lisbon. He answered by showing his dispatches to Admiral Siniavin and his passport. Spite of the presence and the vehement assertions of the peasant, he persisted in the same story and did not contradict himself once.

"Ask him," said the presiding officer at last, "if he loves the Spaniards, as he is not a Frenchman?"

"Certainly," said Leckinski, "I like the Spanish nation, and I esteem it for its noble character. I wish our two nations were friends."

"Colonel," said the interpreter to the president, "the prisoner says that he hates us because we make war like banditti; that he despises us, and that his only regret is that he cannot unite the whole nation in one man, to end this odious war at a single blow."

While he was saying this, the eyes of the whole tribunal were attentively watching the slightest movement of the prisoner's countenance, in order to see what effect the interpreter's treachery would have upon him. But Leckinski had expected to be put to the test in some way, and was determined to baffle all their attempts.

"Gentlemen," said Castanos, "it seems to me that this young man cannot be suspected; the peasant must be deceived. The prisoner may pursue his journey, and when he reflects on the hazard of our position he will find the severity we have been obliged to use excusable."

Leckinski's arms and dispatches were returned, he received a free pass, and thus this noble youth came victorious out of the severest trial that the human spirit can be put to.—H. K. in New York News.

Peculiarities of Nervous Women.

Says a physician who is a specialist in nervous diseases: "The vagaries of nervous women would fill a volume. I have, however, a profound respect for their sincerity and a deep sympathy with their victims. One of my patients, a fine looking woman, with a splendid physique, is reduced to a condition bordering on insanity by a high wind. If she is out in it her misery is heightened. She says she has a dazed, confused feeling that amounts to bewilderment, and she feels as if any moment she would lose her hold on reason and sense."

"Another of my patients cannot endure to hear toast crunched between the teeth of another person. She can eat it herself, but has to leave the table if another does, so great is her distress. In other respects she is a woman of strong character. It would be interesting to trace the origin of such apparently causeless conditions."—New York Times.

The Zither.

The zither is a stringed instrument which has not as yet a very great following in New York. It has the sweetness of the guitar and mandolin, with the depth and richness of the harp. In the hands of an expert performer, who thoroughly understands the scope of the instrument, no music can be more delicious. It is somewhat difficult to learn, is played with both hands, a shield being worn on the thumb of the right hand, and has from thirty-one to forty-four strings.—New York Press.

Fine Clothes.

"The soil of California is so fruitful," said a native of the Golden State, "that a man who accidentally dropped a box of matches in his field discovered the next year a fine forest of telegraph poles." "That's nothing to my state," said a native of Illinois. "A cousin of mine who lives there lost a button off his jacket and in less than a month he found a brand new suit of clothes hanging on a fence near the spot."—Texas Siftings.