# THE JOURNAL.

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## PRINTEMPS.

*To the Editor:*

Here is a balmy little thing,
To fill your heart with joy;
But as it is a song of spring,
I send it by a boy.

THE POEM.

The vine on the cot is blowing,
The nest is built in the tree,
And the apple limbs are snowing
Their blooms in the fragrant lea.
The bird to his mate is singing,
The lambkin skips on the hill,
And the roby clover's springing
Beside the gurgling rill.

Sir Strephon his love is sighing,
The cricket begins to chirp,
And the boy in the back yard's tying
The can to the brindled purp.

Above the lake in the hollow
That mirrors a cloudless sky
Is darting the airy swallow,
And the purple dragon-fly.
The bumble-bee in the garden
Runs riot the livelong day,
And Maud in her Dolly Varden
Plucks flowers along the way.

Sir Stephon his love is sighing,
The cricket begins to chirp,
And the boy in the back yard's tying
The can to the brindled purp.

POSTSCRIPT.

If this poetic daisy
Should make you sad and sore,
And get you wild and crazy
To spill me on the floor,
And hurl me through the casement,
Or maul me like a toy,
And drop me to the basement,
Why—take it out of the boy!

* * * * *

EPITAPH.

Beneath this stone lies Johnny Green,
An office-boy of modest mien,
Who found the pathway to the tomb,
Straight from an editorial room.
—*R. K. Munkittrick, in Harper's Magazine.*

## ANNINA.

Pastor Comba was a Waldensian clergyman, whose acquaintance I made at a prayer meeting in Venice. There are prayer meetings in Venice, and the Italians relate their experiences and sing hymns with all the fervor of enthusiastic Methodists. My friend, Miss Leslie, called for me, one evening, and I accompanied her because I thought it rather novel to glide to a prayer meeting in a gondola. We went some distance, twisting through narrow canals, turning innumerable corners, shooting a score of bridges, while the soft moonlight beamed as brightly as it did on the night when Jessica escaped from Shylock's house. We halted at last before a great, grim palace, and a tall man hastened forward to help us up the slippery steps. This was Pastor Comba, a singularly handsome man, with a silky beard and mustache covering the lower part of his face. He led the way up a wide marble staircase to a large room, where thirty or forty men and women were assembled. Some were devout souls; some, like me, had been brought by a friend; and a few were there out of sheer curiosity. One peasant entered, looked about him with a puzzled air, and asked what was going on. The reply made him cross himself and hasten away, shaking the unholy dust from his feet.

The room had been, in days gone by, a banquet hall, and the ceiling showed rosy nymphs and bacchantes, now very dingy and badly defaced. As an offset to these pagan pictures, one side of the hall was covered with Scripture texts, and where a Catholic would have looked to find a basin of holy water was a table full of tracts. In a corner stood a parlor organ, a young lady seated on a stool before it, intently studying a hymn book. Thither Pastor Comba led us, and introduced us to his niece, Signorina Annina Comba. She was not more than seventeen—a pretty, slim, dark-haired slip of a girl, who looked very demure, but her black eyes were bubbling over with life and fun. She had in her hands a copy of Sankey's hymns, an Italian version. The prayer-meeting began with Hold the Fort, Signorina Annina playing the organ and joining in the singing. Overhead, the nymphs still smiled sweetly, and the bacchantes never dropped their wreaths; but two or three gondoliers went out of the hall, knocking a few benches over to show their disapproval. Pastor Comba made a fervid address; a white-headed man in the audience rose, and described his conversion; and finally there came an exhortation from a young man, who appeared to be not more than twenty. His eloquence was tremendous. Signorina Annina's great eyes dilated, and Miss Leslie cried, but the crowd went crazy. Everybody wanted to speak at once, when the young man sat down, and the air was rent with passionate voices that Pastor Comba tried in vain to quell. When order was restored we went home; but we had first been invited by the clergyman to dine with him and his niece on the following evening.

Thus began my acquaintance with the Combas, and that winter I boarded with them in Florence, whither the pastor had been sent to take charge of a Protestant chapel. He had a charming wife, but no children, and Annina passed the winter with them, in order that she might study music. Her home was in Turin, and I asked her, one day, at the dinner table, if there was no good music teachers there.

She smiled significantly, and her uncle shook his finger at her. "Yes, there are music teachers there," he said, "and there is also a young man there, and he distracts Annina's mind; so she must stay here in Florence, if she will learn anything."

Annina very soon told me that she was engaged to be married, and in a week I knew all about Allesio Ghiandaja. I heard of his blue eyes, his curly hair, his beautiful white hands and his sweet tenor voice. Annina showed me his portrait, which she wore in a locket, and I pleased her by saying that he must be very handsome.

"An Apollo!" she exclaimed.

She wrote many letters to him, and received many in return, and as a favor she would occasionally show me a line or two. We became excellent friends, despite the disparity of our ages, and I often took her with me to walk, or to visit the galleries. She talked continually about her Allesio; but she spoke in Italian, so it was good practice for me in that language. He was a neighbor's son, and she had known him from babyhood.

"But we did not love," she said, "until one summer, when his family and mine went to Switzerland together. Then we found out."

"Did he tell you?" I asked.

She looked much scandalized. "He told my mother," she answered, "and mother told me; but I knew it before," she added, naively. "There is much in a glance."

The rogue shot a demure sidelong look at me, as she said this, and gave an ecstatic little skip. We were walking in the cascine, and the officers bestowed bold stares of admiration on Annina. She was very pretty, and by no means unconscious of it; but she talked of her beauty in the same frank way that she did of her love affair.

"Were you ever alone with Allesio—I mean after you became engaged?" I asked, wondering whether old customs still held sway.

"No, no!" she cried. "That my mother would never allow."

I felt her hand tighten on my arm, and she suddenly became silent. She did not even grow gay at the sight of Mr. Livingstone driving his sixteen or eighteen horses. At dinner, she spoke hardly a word, and her uncle rallied her on her melancholy, her unwonted silence. "No letter from Allesio?" he said; for when no letter came, Annina usually wept copiously.

"O, she had a ream of paper this morning," his wife answered, a trifle impatiently. She was a plain, matter-of-fact woman, and she thought Annina a silly, romantic girl, whose enthusiasm should be crushed. She told me privately that she had a very poor opinion of Allesio Ghiandaja.

"My brother-in-law would do better to arrange a marriage for Annina with his partner, Signor Benelli," she said. "He is a prudent, middle-aged man, and would make an excellent husband."

"But if she loves Allesio?" I asked; for although I was forty-seven, I was sentimental.

Signora Comba shrugged her handsome shoulders. "Annina's love doesn't count for much," she replied. "She would love a broomstick."

I did not agree with her. Annina was a child of an ardent, passionate temperament. She could love, and she loved Allesio.

Late that night she came to my bedroom, dressed in a flowing white wrapper and a pair of scarlet slippers, her long black hair floating about her shoulders. If she had sung the mad-song from Lucia I should not have been particularly surprised; but I was surprised, not to say horrified, when she flung herself on her knees before me and burst out crying. I finally succeeded in comforting her, and she raised her disheveled head. "O," she moaned. "you will think me so wicked! I lied to you. I did see Allesio alone once. It was in the garden, and by moonlight. You will never tell? Promise me never to tell."

I solemnly promised. I had heard of lovers in a moonlight garden before, and I mentioned the fact now.

"But in America!" she exclaimed, as though anything were possible there. "I was so frightened that evening!" She shuddered at the recollection. "I only stayed ten minutes, and I was trembling all the time; for if my mother had discovered us, she—oh, I can't think what she would have done!"

I saw him at Christmas time, this Signor Ghiandaja, for he came with his future mother-in-law to pay a visit. They arrived late one evening, and the mother entered first. Allesio had stopped below to pay the cabman, she said; but in a minute he walked into the drawing-room, where we were all assembled. He greeted Pastor Comba and his wife, he was introduced to me, and finally he approached Annina, with both hands outstretched. She came forward slowly, her head hanging and a hot flush dyeing her cheeks; she put her hands in his and looked up at him shyly. He glanced over his shoulder at the mother, a plump, consequential little woman. "With your permission," he said; then without waiting for it, he stooped and kissed Annina. For a moment she stood bewildered. Her mother began to laugh, and Annina covered her face with her hands and ran away, while Allesio twirled his mustache and looked very handsome. I admire audacity in a man, and I admired him, although there was a gleam in his eyes that made me distrust him. He divined that I was *simpatica*, and during his visit he poured out his heart to me, as Annina had poured out hers. I took these lovers under my wing; I carried them off on walks and drives, never neglecting an opportunity to turn my back on them, and acting deaf and blind to their whispers and glances. In return these lovers declared an undying affection for me.

"You must come and see us, when we are married," Allesio said. "There shall be a room set apart for you; and you must stay weeks—a whole winter. Annina *mia* and I will try to prove that we are not ungrateful. We shall never forget you, eh, Annina?"

She shook her head and slipped her hand in mine, by way of reply. She never chattered in his hearing; she became shy and silent in his presence, hardly daring to raise her eyes; but when she did raise them, it was to bestow an eloquent glance on her lover. At table she sat beside him, and she blushed when he filled her wineglass, blushed again when he passed her the bread. Alone with me, however, she rattled away as though to make up for lost time.

Once I asked her who Signor Benelli was, and she looked at me in surprise.

"Papa's partner," she replied.

"Do you like him, Annina?"

"*Cosi, cosi.* He is not young; he is fat, he is bald, but he is very amiable."

Clearly the thought of him as a suitor had never entered her head, and I concluded that Signora Comba had mentioned him only to contrast him with Allesio. I rather fell in love with the young man, too. He was always the same, serene and smiling; perhaps a trifle arrogant, a trifle vain, but courteous and considerate. Annina's mother I disliked, for she seemed a purse-proud dame, and I know that she told Signora Comba that I ought to pay more for my board. Annina stood in awe of her, and her mother corrected her continually. It was "Sit up, Annina;" or, "Turn out your toes, Annina;" or, "Take care what you say, Annina." I was glad when the tiresome woman went, but I missed Allesio's bright smile and melodious voice, and Annina was sad-eyed for a week. She wrote more letters than ever, and received more; meanwhile the spring came up our way. Annina grew very religious; she went to prayer-meetings with her uncle, she attended service three times on Sunday and she visited the poor with her aunt. She became interested in a Protestant charity school; so she taught ragamuffins the Testament twice a week. The ragamuffins' fathers and mothers, ignorant folk, Pastor Comba declared, did not like to see their children taught, and they stoned the school-room one day. Annina came home, a martyr, with her right wrist sprained; so I wrote letters for her to Allesio. In them she described minutely all that she did and thought; nothing was too trivial, and I was skeptical enough to wonder if any man lived in this workaday world who could read one of those ten-page letters through, every morning for a year. But a man in love performs extraordinary feats—there is no doubt of that.

Suddenly, Allesio's letters stopped. The days went by, and it was almost a week since Annina had heard from him. She ate nothing, she refused to go out, and she locked herself in her room to weep and be miserable. Her uncle and aunt and I met in conclave one evening, for we feared she would fall ill.

"She was very feverish last night," declared Pastor Comba, who loved his niece, albeit he teased her unmercifully.

"She has eaten almost nothing for a week," said his wife.

"She will die if he deserts her," added I, the sentimental spinster.

Then we three grown-up people smiled, but we all felt sorry for the poor girl. The next morning we called in a physician, who looked very grave.

"She must be cajoled," he said. "If she will not eat, and will not go out, and will only cry, she will surely get the fever. There is a good deal of fever this spring."

What were we to do? We cajoled, we commanded, we implored; but Annina refused to eat more than the least morsel of bread, or to drink anything but a little water. A girl might keep that up for two days—I mean a girl who was shamming—but Annina kept it up for nearly two weeks. At last a letter came from Allesio—a short letter, written in a wavering hand and dated at Paris. He wrote that he was ill and among strangers, but that he was slowly getting better. Annina was eager to go to him by the first train—she even tried to run away; so we all watched her like cats until Allesio was well and back in Turin. As his letters grew regular she regained her appetite and was soon her joyous self once more.

It was my plan to join Miss Leslie in Venice that spring, but before I left Florence I bought a wedding present for Annina, which I confided to Pastor Comba's care. She besought me to come to her wedding, which was to take place in September, and sobbed when I told her that in September I hoped to return to America.

"You will be in Europe again?" she said, lifting her tearful face from my shoulder.

"Yes, I shall come to Europe again," I replied.

"Then you must surely pay Allesio and me a long visit." She put her mouth close to my ear. "I shall be his wife," she whispered. "I shall be Annina Ghiandaja."

"The cab is here!" cried Pastor Comba, and I tore myself free from Annina's clinging arms.

She wrote me several letters that summer. She seemed very happy, for she was traveling with her parents, and Allesio was with them for awhile. In September, as I was speeding toward London, an old gentleman in the railway carriage saw that I was reading Italian, and addressed me in that tongue. He was very polite to me, in a benign way, and told me that he was a banker in Turin; so I asked him if he knew Giovanni Comba, the silk merchant.

"Yes, indeed," he replied; "I know him and his family very well. Are you acquainted with them?"

"With the signora and with Annina," I said.

"Ah, Annina," he repeated. "I trotted her on my knee the other day, and now she is engaged to be married."

"To Allesio Ghiandaja," I added.

"He is not worthy of her," said the old banker. "He drinks and he gambles. He went to Paris last spring, and returned half dead from the effects of dissipation. I hope Comba will break off the match. Little Annina deserves a better husband."

Just before the steamer sailed from Liverpool I received a letter from Annina. She wrote in the gayest of spirits, although she told me that her marriage had been postponed.

"Dear Allesio must go to Lyons on business," she wrote, "but he will soon return. I have made him a little traveling cap of blue silk, and you cannot think how well he looks in it. He says that he will not dare wear it, for all the girls will fall in love with him, and he will surely be carried off by somebody. 'And then,' he adds, 'what would you do, Annina, *mia*?' Ah, what should I do!"

So she ran on for ten pages—Allesio, Allesio, always Allesio. I answered as soon as I reached New York, and in the next letter I expected to hear of Annina's marriage. As the weeks slipped by I pictured the child on her wedding journey, too happy to write to me or anybody else. The new year dawned, a clear, frosty day, the sky a dazzling blue, and the air full of powdery snow that blew off the house-tops. On such a day the sentimental traveler thinks of orange groves, of gray olive orchards, of the blue, tideless sea breaking on the Southern coast. It was on that day that I received my last letter from Annina; for, although I had written to her several times, she had ignored me completely. After I read it I brought out the letter that had reached me in Liverpool, and re-read that, hardly able to believe my own eyes. Some day I mean to go to Europe again, and I shall certainly look up Annina. I do not know what to think of her. The letter I received in Liverpool was written in August; the letter I received in New York was writen four months later. The last letter I will translate as literally as possible, keeping the original punctuation. Such a neat letter! I wonder if she dashed it off at fever heat, or composed it carefully, biting the pen-holder with her white little teeth, and wrinkling her pretty brows! If I could answer this, I should think that I understood the mystery.

PIAZZA D'AZEGLIO.
TURIN, 4 December.

DEAR MISS PENNIMAN:—Since last I wrote to you, so much has happened that my poor brain is in quite a whirl. I am the happiest of women, the wife of the best of men and mistress of the prettiest house in all Turin. Just think, a whole house! Mamma, who still lives in an apartment, envies me, I know. It is a great thing to be married. Everybody treats me with respect, even mamma, but I must except my cook, Assunta, who used to be my nurse and who still considers me a child and scolds me. I was married in white silk (hand embroidered!) and my husband gave me pearls to wear. He is so good, so kind! I love him better every day, if that were possible. Dear uncle married us, and then went to Africa to rescue the heathen from their darkness. We all pray that he may succeed in his labors and that his health may hold good. Aunt Maria went with him. She wore her old gray silk at the wedding, and cried all the time. I never saw her cry before, but I suppose she was thinking of Africa.

After the wedding, the journey! My husband let me plan the route. I could not decide, so he helped me, and we bought guidebooks and maps, and finally we made up our minds to travel through our own country. I had never been farther south than Florence. We visited Genoa and Pisa, and finally went to Rome, and spent two delicious weeks there, visiting those monuments that history has rendered so familiar. We both caught cold, and my husband was ill for two days and I nursed him, glad to show my devotion and yet grieved that he should suffer! He recovered entirely and we were able to proceed to Naples, where we lingered in rapture before that beautiful bay so often described in prose and poetry. Then on to Pompeii! I thought of that terrible day when Vesuvius overwhelmed the smiling country and dealt death to men at their labor, women with their children in their arms. My husband bought me some Pompeiian ornaments for my drawing room, but they were so ugly that I was not sorry when, on arriving home, I found that I had left them in the hotel at Naples.

At last the journey was over and we returned to Turin. We are living in a lovely house in the Piazza d'Azeglio. It is beautifully furnished, and I have the old cook, Assunta; but I mean to send her away, for she still treats me like a child. In my own room I have put the lovely present you left for me, and I thank you for it a thousand times. You were so kind to me there in Florence. I often speak of you to my husband, who joins me in hoping that you will pay us a long visit very soon. He wants to do everything for me, and is the kindest, dearest of husbands.

And now I must end my long letter with the hope that it finds you well and in good spirits. Think sometimes of me, and remember that I am the happiest woman in this great world that the good God has given to his unworthy servants. ANNINA BENELLI.

P. S. It is not Allesio!

—*Charles Dunning, in Atlantic Monthly.*

—Four nine-year-old boys were recently brought into a New Haven court for mocking and teasing a policeman. The Judge sentenced them to be confined in the woman's department of the station-house until three o'clock in the afternoon.—*Hartford Post.*

### Neurophobia.

In the afternoon of one of the sunniest days last week two men got on a Madison avenue car going down town at the corner of Fifty-fourth Street. One was a thin pallid, rather emaciated gentleman, possibly forty years of age, with a peculiar transparency of the temples, restless eyes and a singular nervousness of manner; the other large, well nourished, massive and rather corpulent, with the placid, self-satisfied countenance of the man who has succeeded in the world and feels on good terms with it. The pair might readily have been mistaken for a madman and his keeper, only the feebler of the two was evidently not past the verge of sanity, while the placid companion was a trifle less vigilant than the custodian of a maniac ought to be, and moreover was recognized by at least one passenger as a famous physician.

The thin gentleman shifted his position uneasily, gazed out of the car window a moment, then studied the faces of his three or four fellow passengers with the rapid intensity of a physiognomist, and glanced furtively at the open door, in which the figure of the conductor was framed like a full-length photograph.

"Fares, gents," grumbled that functionary, stalking into the car. The thin gentleman paid for two, and again glanced in the direction of the open door. His hand shook as he replaced his pocket-book, and a shiver passed over him. His portly companion turned and spoke to him in a low tone. The words were inaudible, and the intonations were soft, soothing and evidently expostulatory. Suddenly the pale passenger sprang to his feet, pulled the bell violently and rushed out of the car, which was now midway between Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth Streets. The portly physician rose from his seat in a leisurely, comfortable sort of way, and alighted at the corner of Forty-eighth street, where the car came to a full stop. The thin gentleman, excited, nervous, out of breath, and trembling all over like a leaf in the wind, joined the doctor and began to speak apologetically: "No use, you see. I can't stand it. You really must excuse me, doctor.

"Pooh! pooh!" laughed the portly physician, "You'll conquer the thing by and by. Try again, my dear boy."

"I'll step across and take the elevated down town with your permission, Doctor," said the thin gentleman, making no direct reply to his friend's exhortation. He lifted his neat Derby hat, with a hand that was almost pellucid in its delicacy and whiteness, and was gone.

"That man," said the doctor, "is one of a hundred cases that have come under my notice in the last few years—a strange case of nervous impression. He is not in the least timid; will ride down town in a Third avenue car, a Broadway stage, or an elevated train, with perfect composure, but he has a morbid, unconquerable nervous terror of the Fourth avenue, and would suffer any inconveniece or incur any expense rather than ride in a Fourth avenue car. I can't trace this impressson to any tangible cause, nor can he. He has never met with an accident on the Fourth avenue, so far as he remembers. It is simply one of those inexplicable, unreasoning, spontaneous impressions of the nervous system that no science can explain. The man is not a crank, nor in the least given to eccentricities of opinion or manners. On the contrary, his name is familiar as that of a shrewd banker. As to courage, he is as brave as a lion, as I have occasion to know, and would fight odds of ten to one, if his blood was up. Only, the moment he finds himself on a Fourth avenue car he is seized with a paroxysm of nervous terror which he cannot control; and that is the end of it."

The doctor mused a moment. "Walk across with me to my office," he said, "and I'll talk with you by the way. Such cases are by no means uncommon, though no paper has ever been written on the subject, and there is no name for the malady in the medical books. The late Dr. George M. Beard—as able and acute as he was eccentric—invented the term neurophobia to describe the condition existing in such cases, and the singular thing about this neurophobia is that it seldom occurs with women, given, as they are supposed to be, to nervous impressions and hysterical fancies."

In one of the doctor's office journals there were notes of this case: A patient, a man of tolerably robust and well nourished physique, forty-six years old, lawyer by profession—cannot bear to cross Broadway at the Astor House. He will walk down to Fulton Street or up to Park place, but cross under the shadow of the Astor House never. There is no assignable cause for the terror; it simply exists and that is all. It came upon him suddenly one afternoon two years ago, after a hard day's work in court. He started for the Astor House to get a cup of coffee and his regular half a dozen raw oysters. To his wonder, as he was about to step from the curbstone at the corner of the postoffice he was seized with a fit of trembling and terror, and since then he has never been able to command himself to cross at that point, though he has often tested his self-control by trying it.

Another patient had the same terror of the Jersey City Ferry at the foot of Cortlandt Street. The Brooklyn ferries have no terrors for him, the Desbrosses Street Ferry is not objectionable, but if his life depended upon crossing to Jersey City at Cortlandt Street he could not command his nerves to accomplish it. As in the other two, there is no assignable cause for the morbid impression in this case. It came suddenly, and has been in existence for four years.

"Sometimes," continued the doctor, "the victim has a terror of a certain street, avenue, or public square; and one man I know cannot pass the statue of Lincoln at Union Square without experiencing a nervous tremor. But, with regard to some of our outdoor statuary, nervous dread is natural enough."

"One of my patients," he went on, "a literary man of some reputation, has a nervous terror of words ending in or containing the diphthong 'ch.' This man will take any trouble to avoid the relative pronoun 'which.' He has not for years written any one of the words terminating in *tch*—such as catch, fetch, scratch, batch, latch or patch. For match he always writes lucifer or Vesuvian; for fetch, either bring or obtain; for catch, he uses capture or some other proximate. He has often tried to overcome the prejudice, but some how his hand begins to tremble, his breath comes short and he cannot form the letters. For character, he always writes disposition, reputation, kind, description—anything that will pass muster as a substitute."

Cases of neurophobia as concerns colors are not uncommon. One of the Doctor's patients—a woman this time—is driven into hysteria by a certain pale, cold shade of blue. And a nervous, fidgety little man, who called upon him to be treated for musicians' cramp, boxed his ears in his own office for wearing a crimson scarf, and begged his pardon for it, declaring he could not control himself if his life depended upon it.

The peculiar nervous affection illustrated in the preceding cases must not be confounded with the mere whimsical prejudices and fancies common with invalids. The latter, though persistent and often not easily banished by the will, are by no means unconquerable, while in neurophobia the symptoms are physical in their description. The patient shrieks and shudders, and the terror, though groundless, is unconquerable as the dread of death.—*N. Y. Sun.*