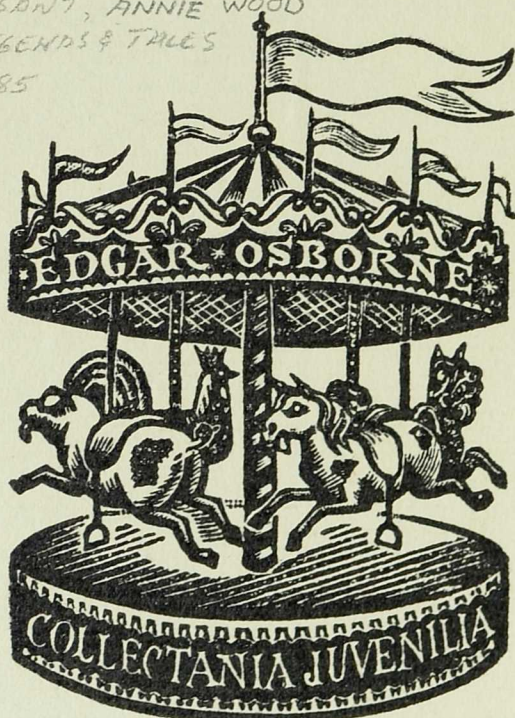


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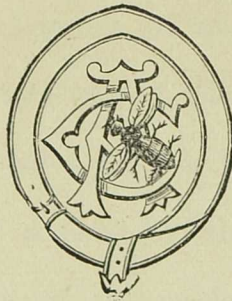


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LEGENDS AND TALES.

BY
ANNIE BESANT.



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P R E F A C E.

BUT few words are needed to introduce this little book. It forms the first volume of the Young Folks' Library, a series of works suitable for boys and girls, free from the superstition which spoils, for many, literature issued for the young. Herein all mythologies are placed on the same level, and the legends of one faith are regarded as neither less nor more sacred than those of any other. The two concluding tales have a historical nucleus, and tell how the dying science of the ancient world and the new born science of the modern world were alike martyred by Christianity.

ANNIE BESANT.

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LEGENDS.

Ganga, the River Maid.

A LEGEND OF HINDUSTAN.

FAR away, in the vast range of mountains that close Hindustan against the barbarians of Thibet, the great God Siva lay asleep. Around him rose the sky-piercing, snow-capped peaks of the mighty Himalayas; and as he slept his tangled hair, storm-tossed, wind-driven, was played with by King Frost, and the snow-maidens and ice-maidens of his court hung ice-drops on the hairs of head and face. And Siva slept for many a hundred years, for he was weary with all his work in Hindustan; and while he slept the sun blazed down on the vast plains and slopes and valleys, and burned up cruelly the green herbs and glorious trees, for there were no rivers to water the arid soil; and the people cried aloud to Siva for water, and Siva slept unheeding.

Now in the mountains there lived a great king, King Himavat, with his fair wife, Menaka, a nymph of the air, and the king and queen had one child only, a lovely maiden whom they named Ganga. As Ganga one day wandered through her father's snowy realm, she came to a beautiful ice-cavern that she had never seen before. Long icicles hung from the glittering walls; pillars of ice held

up the lofty roof ; and as she stood at the mouth, peeping in timidly, a ray of sunlight flashed past her into the cavern, and painted its seven colors on point, and arch, and



WOMEN OF THE HIMALAYAS SEEKING WATER.

shaft. Ganga clapped her white hands with delight, and ran into the cavern ; and there she stayed, while the searched for her high and low, and never dreamed of look-

ing in the tangles of Siva's hair, where the exquisite ice-cavern had been formed. At last Himavat and Menaka went to look for her, and chid her gently for her mischief when they found her; but when she showed them the fairy cavern they forgave her, and the three made their home there for many a year.

But one day Himavat returned from a journey, and his heart was heavy and his face sad. "What ails you, king and husband?" whispered Menaka quietly, and Ganga nestled on her father's knee, and wound her soft arms round his neck. And the king spoke:

"The land suffers grievously for want of water; the crops are shrivelled, the cattle are wasting, men and women try in vain to still the moaning of their little ones. Siva sleeps and heeds not the misery, and there is no help in Gods for men."

He paused, and no word broke the silence; but from Ganga's golden hair dropped sweet water, as the ice-wreath wherewith she had crowned herself slowly melted round her head. Himavat looked at her and covered his face, and she whispered in his ear: "Is there no help for men?"

Then he raised his heavy eyes, tear-laden, and looked upon his child:

"Aye, Ganga, there is help, but it is hard to give. If a maiden pure as ice and white as snow would leave her home, and go and dwell for ever in the sultry plains, then from her life freely given would flow life for the perishing people, and her name would be sacred and beloved by all in Hindustan."

And Ganga knew that her great father bade her take this work on her fair shoulders; but she turned away and

hid herself in the recesses of her ice-cavern, and would not go forth. And ever the cry of the dying people went up to a sky like burnished brass, and their wail reached Ganga in her cavern; but still she would not move.

And her father bade her go; and her mother, weeping, prayed her to give her life for men; still Ganga would not move. But one day Himavat came in, with a child dying



HIMAVAT BIDS GANGA GO FORTH.

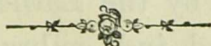
in his arms; the soft skin was blistered with the heat, the little lips black and parched, the mouth open, the eyes fixed and glassy; and Himavat laid the child on Ganga's lap, and said: "It dies of thirst". As Ganga bent over the little face, a drop of water fell from her hair on the parched lips, and the rose-red color flashed back into them, and the babe opened its eyes and laughed for joy. Ganga sprang to her feet: "Aye, I will go, father, mother. I will go to save the perishing people, and to bring joy to

the little ones who die for lack of water." And the beauty of a great sacrifice came into her face, as she turned to the mouth of the ice cavern, where she had dwelt in her selfish joy. And as she left the cavern there was a change, and the fair form melted away, and the golden-bright hair and white hands vanished, and a stream of pure soft water, with white flicks of foam, danced over a bed of golden-bright sand, and the water whispered as it ran: "I am Ganga, Ganga, and I go to bless the thirsty plains, and to carry life to those dying for my stream".

And wherever Ganga turned flowers sprang up to welcome her, and stately trees bowed over her waters, and fainting cattle grew strong as they stood knee-deep in her shallows, and children romped and played with her wavelets, and strong men bathed in her torrents, and fair women laved their bare white limbs in her pools. And Ganga the maiden became Ganga the mother, giver of life and joy and fertility to the broad plains of Hindustan.

So the life that was given became the source of life throughout the great Hindu land; and as she rolls ever towards the sea, Ganga murmurs to herself: "To give oneself for others is duty: to spread happiness around one's steps for others to gather up is truest joy".

And to this day the Hindu, dying afar off from the sacred river, prays that he may be buried in Ganga's golden sand; and dying lips cry with their last breath: "Ganga, Ganga"; and dying eyes fix their last look on Ganga's broad pure stream.



The Stealing of Persephone.

A LEGEND OF GREECE.

ON the hills of Olympus was dispute. Zeus, the father of Gods and men, sat listening on his throne; Eros lay weeping at his feet; Hera, the ox-eyed, sat gloomily in the background; Hermes stood by ready for flight, and listen-



ing eagerly to Pallas Athena, who vehemently urged on the assembled deities some decided course of action.

The circumstances were these; Demeter, the fruitful earth-Goddess—called by the Latins Ceres, or Bona Dea, the good Goddess—had just embraced the knees of the cloud-compeller, and had craved his mighty aid; and she

stood now waiting the answer to her appeal, and vowed by her corn and her golden fruit that famine should visit earth, and the high Gods fail of their accustomed offerings, if succor were not given her in her distress. For as her fair daughter Persephone wandered with her maidens over the plain of Enna, gathering the fragrant blossoms of that garden of Sicily, an earthquake had rent the ground at

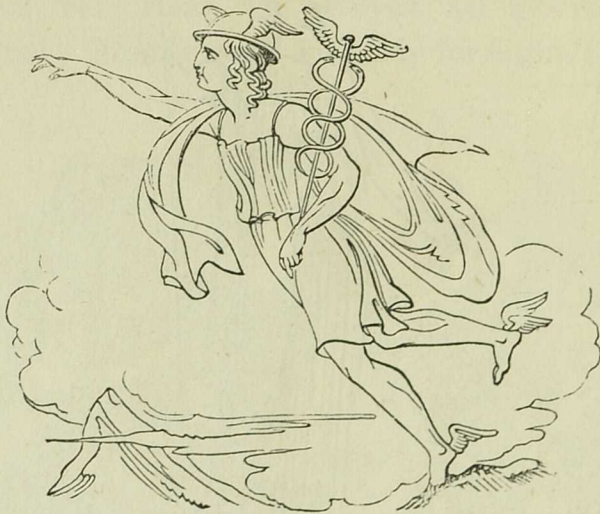


DEMETER'S VOW.

her feet, and from the yawning gulf had uprisen Aïdes, the dark ruler of the nether-world. He had leapt from his chariot, drawn by four black horses from whose nostrils darted fire, and clasping the shrieking maiden in his arms had carried her in a whirlwind across hill and dale till he reached the Cyanian fount, and drove his chariot into the terrified waters, till they fled before the hoofs of his trampling steeds, and opened a way for him to pass into the

dark kingdom which he ruled. Near this fount had Demeter found her daughter's veil, tear-sodden, and Arethusa the nymph revealed to her the theft committed by dark Aïdes and the place of her sad child's abode; for Aïdes had wedded Persephone, sore weeping, and she dwelt now in the dim Elysian fields, and bewailed the fair sunshine and the cool, soft airs of earth.

Thus had spoken Demeter, loud lamenting, and in vain had Zeus striven to win her favor for her enforced son-in-



WING-FOOTED HERMES.

law, the mighty king of the shades and of all the dead. Then had grey-eyed Pallas Athena pleaded the mother's cause, and in her wisdom she advised that if no food grown in the dim twilight of Aïdes' realms had passed the earthly lips of Persephone, she should be free to re-ascend to the upper world and dwell as before in her mother's home. And as she spoke Zeus bowed his mighty head, and Olympus shook and trembled at the awful sign of confirmation.

So Demeter fled earthwards in her dragon-chariot, and descended into the twilight and sought Aïdes in his gloomy halls. But lo! Persephone, as she walked through the Elysian fields, had seen a pomegranate, red and luscious, and plucking she had eaten thereof a seed ere she cast it from her in loathing, remembering the soil on which it grew. Therefore the mother returned weeping, and hid herself away from all men's eyes. Then famine spread her dark wings over the land, and the corn withered ere it



AÏDES.

was grown, and the fruit dropped unripened to the ground, for the mighty heart of the earth-Goddess was crushed within her, and her face was turned away from the land she had made fertile with her smile.

At length Zeus called to him Hermes, the swift-footed messenger of the Gods, and he bade him haste to Demeter and bid her seek Aïdes once again, and pray him to set his fair wife free six months out of each rolling year, that so she might dwell in the light with her mother awhile,

and then again brighten with her presence the gloomy shades below ; and if Aïdes would listen to this prayer, then would Zeus, as dowry for blue-eyed Persephone, bestow on her lord the fair Sicilian island where first his eyes had rested on the maid. So Hermes, wing-footed, hasted to Demeter and bade her once again seek to bring her daughter home. And again Demeter sought the shades, and found Aïdes sitting lonely on his throne, with his three-headed hound beside him, mourning that Persephone would not be comforted. And when he saw the

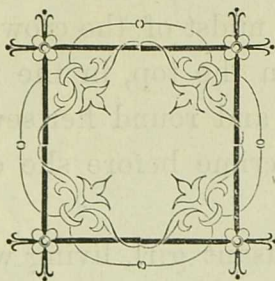


DEMETER'S GIFTS.

mother weeping, and the two fair women clasped in each other's arms, Aïdes sighed and bade his bride go earthward if she would, and for six months she should dwell in the sunlight, and for six months should reign in her husband's halls ; so should the earth be no longer sorrowful, and famine should be scourged back to her icy cave.

And so it was. And each spring Persephone comes back to the earth, and the flowers spring up to greet her,

and the full ear and the golden fruit ripen under Demeter's smile as she dwells by her daughter's side. And when harvest is over, and Demeter has showered on mankind her blessed gifts, then Persephone quits the light of the sun and seeks her husband's realms, dwelling in peace therein while the wild winds of autumn storm, and the snow and rain come down; and, winter over and gone, her voice from below wakes the violets and the snow-drops, her heralds, and when the cowslip bells are ringing, Persephone lifts her face to meet her mother's kiss.



The First Roses.

A CHRISTIAN LEGEND.

TOWARDS the wide market-place of an Eastern city streamed a hurrying crowd. The hot rays of the sun blazed down on city and people, and lighted up angry, cruel, and enquiring faces all turned in one direction—the central point of the square.

“Who is she?” “What has she done?” “Where did they find her?” The questions were heard all through the crowd, and the answer was always the same: “She has committed a great crime, and she is rightly punished”.

And there in the midst of the crowd was raised a high pile of wood, and on the top, in the middle of the pile, stood a young girl, and round her several priests urging her to confess her crime before she died. For this was her story:

Rosetta was a peasant girl, living with her old grandmother, and her face was very fair. Large dark eyes had she, and curved full Eastern lips, and one day as she leant idly on the edge of the fountain, resting a moment ere she carried home her freshly-filled water-pitcher, a young man riding by checked his horse to speak with her, and her sweet voice and gentle manner caught his fancy, and he carried her heavy pitcher to her cottage home, and she thanked him softly, and he went his way. But he could



ROSETTA.

not forget the girl leaning on the grey stone wall of the fountain, with the dull red pitcher outlined against the prickly cactus leaves.

So the young man came often to the fountain-side, and often carried home the pitcher, and said soft words to the aged woman in the cottage for love of her dark-eyed grandchild; and at last he prayed Rosetta to marry him, and Rosetta would not, for she loved her pretty cottage-home and her grandmother who had none save her, and the youth went away, angry and threatening mischief.

And so it befell that one summer evening as Rosetta went fountainwards, as usual, to fill her pitcher, she was suddenly seized by some armed men, who carried her away by force, in spite of all her weeping and crying for mercy, and they shut her up in a castle belonging to the youth, who was of high rank and wealth, and for some weeks they coaxed her, and bribed her with presents, to love the wicked youth; and when she would not they beat her and threatened to kill her, and at last they took her and carried her away to the great neighboring town, and there they bribed bad men to accuse her of a great crime, and she was tried and found guilty; and she was condemned to be burned alive in the middle of the great market-place, for that was the cruel punishment their laws commanded.

So came it that Rosetta stood on the pile in the market-place, and that so many had crowded round to see her die. But Rosetta persisted that she had done no wrong, and that she was innocent, not guilty; so at last the priests let her alone, and bade them set light to the dry wood, and as the soldiers approached Rosetta's voice was heard calling aloud for help to Mary, the fair Queen of heaven, the

sweet Mother of God : " O Mary, Mother, that sittest with the moon under thy feet and the seven stars round thy head, help and rescue thy child ! Thou knowest my innocence : help, O Mother of God ! "

The wood caught, and the fire kept crackling upwards. Rosetta saw the tongues of flame darting towards her, and shrank back and hid her face. Suddenly there was a great shout, and when she opened her eyes she saw beside her a messenger from Mary, white-robed, with great rainbow-hued wings, and he smiled into her troubled eyes. Then, glancing timidly downwards, she saw no flames, but red and white roses all round her feet and his ; for wherever the flame had kindled the wood red roses blossomed, and where the dead ashes had been white roses gleamed. " And those were the first roses, both white and red, that ever any man saw. "



The Drowning of the World.

A LEGEND OF HINDUSTAN.

MANY, many ages ago, there was a good king named Satyavrata reigning in Hindustan. He was the servant of the spirit who moves upon the face of the waters, and he was gentle and merciful to all living things. The great God Brahma was weary, and desired to slumber; and while he slept the strong demon Hayagriva plotted mischief against the earth.

Now Heri, the preserver of the universe, discovered this plotting of the Prince of Darkness, and he took the form of a tiny fish. And it chanced that Satyavrata, being by the river-side, took up some water in the palm of his hand, and perceived a small fish moving in it. Being so gentle and merciful a man, he poured the water back into the river, setting the fish free, but was astonished to hear a tiny voice crying to him :

“How canst thou, O king, who showest affection to the oppressed, leave me in this river-water, where I am too weak to resist the monsters of the stream, who fill me with dread?”

The king, not knowing who had assumed the form of a fish, applied his mind to its preservation; and, having heard its very suppliant address, he kindly placed it in a small vase full of water. But in a single night its bulk

was so increased that it could not be contained in the jar, and thus again addressed the gentle prince :

“ I am not pleased with living miserably in this little vase ; make me a large mansion where I may dwell in comfort.”

The king, moving it thence, placed it in the water of a cistern, but it grew four feet in less than fifty minutes, and said :

“ O king, it pleases me not to stay vainly in this narrow cistern. Since thou hast granted me an asylum, give me a spacious habitation.”

He then removed it and placed it in a pool, where, having ample space around its body, it became a fish of considerable size.

“ This abode, O king, is not convenient for me, who must swim at large in the waters ; exert thyself for my safety, and remove me to a deep lake.”

Thus addressed, Satyavrata threw the suppliant into a lake, and when it grew of equal bulk with that piece of water he cast the vast fish into the sea. When the fish was thrown into the waves, he thus again spoke to Satyavrata :

“ Here the horned sharks and other monsters of great strength will devour me. Thou shouldest not, O valiant man, leave me in this ocean.”

Thus repeatedly deluded by the fish, who addressed him with gentle words, the king said :

“ Who art thou, that beguilest me in an assumed shape ? Never before have I seen or heard of so prodigious an inhabitant of the waters, who like thee hast filled up in a single day a lake a hundred leagues in circumference. Surely thou art the great Heri, whose dwelling is on the



SATYAVRATA CALLS THE CHOSEN.

waves, and who now, in compassion to thy servants, bearest the form of the natives of the deep !”

Heri, loving the good king who thus implored him, and intending to save him from the sea of destruction caused by the depravity of the age, thus told him how he was to act :

“In seven days from the present time, O good and merciful king, the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death, but in the midst of the destroying waves a large vessel, sent by me for thy use, shall stand before thee. Then shalt thou take all medicinal herbs and all variety of seeds, and accompanied by seven others, encircled by pairs of all brute animals, thou shalt enter the spacious ark, and continue in it secure from the flood on one immense shoreless ocean. When the ship shall be agitated by an impetuous wind, thou shalt fasten it with a large sea-serpent to my horn ; for I will be near thee, drawing the vessel with thee and thy attendants.”

Then Satyavrata put off his shoes in reverence, and went forth and called the chosen seven, and gathered the seeds and the animals, and, turning his face to the north, waited patiently. The sea, overwhelming its shores, deluged the whole earth, and it was soon seen to be increased by showers from immense clouds. Satyavrata still waited, and he saw the vessel advancing, and he entered in, he and all those who were with him. Then Heri appeared in the form of a huge fish, blazing like gold, with one stupendous horn, and the king tied the ship with a cable made of a vast serpent, and so rode over the waves in safety until the flood abated, and the earth was once more seen above the waves.

A Curious Adventure.

A LEGEND OF JUDÆA.

A MAN, roughly dressed, with long floating hair and wild eyes, stood near the sea-shore and gazed over the tumbling waves and upwards at the gloomy sky. For a voice had come rolling down to him from the threatening clouds: "Arise! go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it"; and the man willed not to go on such an errand.

"I will fly," he muttered, "away from the presence of Jahveh, the God of Israel; nor will I go to Nineveh, and proclaim the destruction of her stately palaces and cool sweet groves."

So Jonah travelled to Joppa, the famous sea-port, and paid his fare by ship to Tarshish. Now Tarshish was outside the land of the Hebrew nation, and as Jahveh, the Hebrew God, ruled only over his own people and their land, Jonah bethought him that he could thus escape from his presence. But Jonah forgot that Jahveh's power stretched out for some distance over the sea, and that his enemy might meet him ere he traversed the outermost limits of his kingdom.

And as the ship sailed on its way Jahveh blew hard and a storm arose, so that there was a mighty tempest, which threatened to sink the ship. Then all the sailors called out to their various Gods, to Rimmon and Chemosh and Ashtaroth, and to mighty Baal. But Jonah, who hoped

that Jahveh would not see him, called not to his God, but lay down below, pretending to be fast asleep. Then the captain was very angry, and went down and woke him up roughly, and bade him call on his God, as all the rest were calling on theirs; so poor Jonah was found out and dragged into view of Jahveh's burning eyes. And the consequence was that when the sailors began to cast lots to see who had offended his God and made all the mischief, Jahveh came near, making himself invisible, and threw the fatal lot at Jonah's feet.

Then the sailors gathered round him in a tumult and threatened him, and asked him what crime he had done to bring this trouble upon them from Jahveh, the terrible God of thunder and storm. And Jonah confessed that he was a rebel running away from the God of his own nation, and he bade them throw him out into the sea and leave him to his fate. For Jonah thought within himself that Jahveh would not make so much fuss about his running away, unless he were very anxious to keep him, and he was proud that his God valued him so much. And indeed in those days prophets were much thought of by their own Gods and their own peoples, and for a prophet to run away was a very serious matter.

And as things turned out Jonah was quite right in his calculations, for as he came down splash into the water, a great big whale, sent by Jahveh, came spouting up, and Jonah jumped quickly into his mouth, which he opened widely for the purpose, and then slipped quietly down his throat, out of the way of the salt water, and stopped when he arrived at the stomach and sat down to think. On the whole, Jonah concluded things might have been worse. The smell of his new quarters was rather fishy, but it was

not worse than the docks at Joppa, and though they were dark and rather cramped in space, the ship's hold had not been very comfortable. Besides, he thought, what a fine story it would be to tell when he got to land, and he felt sure that the whale would take him back to his own country as quickly as he could, since the whale, being accustomed to the Arctic waters, would probably feel uncomfortably warm in the hot eastern seas. He did not, however, want to stay in the whale's stomach longer than he could help, so when he thought that they must be getting near home, he began to kick about violently, and to try to climb up to the whale's mouth. This, however, was not so easy as slipping down, and it is doubtful whether Jonah would have succeeded if the whale, getting angry at the fidgetty proceedings of his passenger, had not given a violent cough, and Jonah was shot out violently, and found himself lying safe and sound on the sand.

After this series of adventures, Jonah thought it would not be safe to refuse to go to Nineveh, so he tramped off in a very bad temper, and went crying about the streets that the city would be destroyed within forty days. Then all the people were dreadfully frightened, and dressed themselves up in sacks, and put little sackcloth jackets on all the cats and dogs and other animals, and they all cried, and the dogs howled, and the cats mewed, and the cattle lowed, and there was a dreadful tumult. Then Jonah was quite proud of the commotion he had caused, and Jahveh was very pleased, and declared that he would not think of destroying the people and the cattle who behaved so well.

Now this made Jonah very cross, for it is most annoying for a prophet when his prophecies do not come true. It gives much opportunity for poking fun at him. So Jonah

went out of the city and sat down outside, to watch if, after all, Jahveh would not do as he said at first. And Jahveh, to comfort him, made a beautiful gourd-tree grow up in a night to shade him from the sun, and Jonah felt pleased at the attention, though still troubled in mind. But the next day Jahveh, tired of his prophet's ill-temper, made a worm to kill the gourd, and it withered away even more quickly than it had grown up. And then Jahveh sent a sharp east wind, which blew hard at poor Jonah, and between the keen wind and the hot sun he fainted, and was like to die. Then said Jahveh to him reproachfully: "You are sorry for the gourd which came up in a night and perished in a night; but you want a great city to be destroyed with 120,000 inhabitants and numerous animals".

Really, Jonah was not sorry for the gourd, as Jahveh fancied, but only for his own inconvenience and suffering from its loss. Still he probably felt a little ashamed of himself, and he went away, leaving Nineveh flourishing, in spite of all the predictions which Jahveh had desired him to make, and which all proved untrue.



Drawn from the Waters.

THERE are two legends, one Jewish and one Greek, each of which tells the story of a baby-boy put into an ark and saved from the water. These two legends will be told here one after the other, and our young readers may compare the stories, and choose Perseus or Moses, as they will, for favorite hero. Alike in their babyhood, they were very unlike in their manhood, for one was a savior, the other a destroyer of men.

PERSEUS THE SAVIOR.

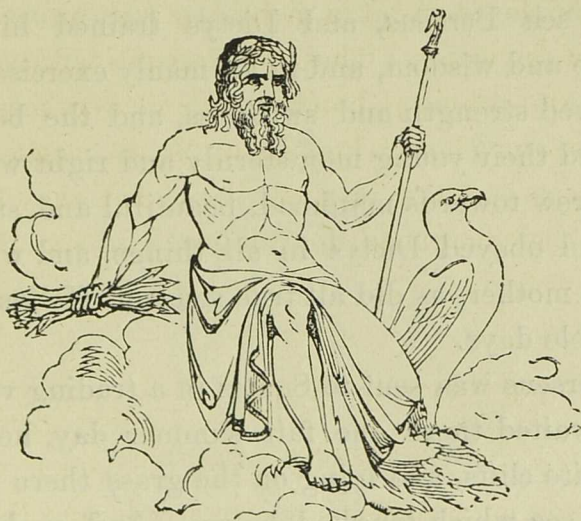
THE GREEK LEGEND.

Wroth was King Acrisius for the words that the prophet had spoken :

“Ho! King Acrisius, ruler of Argos in Hellas! Thou hast slain thy own, and of thine own shall one slay thee! Behold, a virgin shall bear a son, even the virgin Danaë thy daughter, and he shall grow up to rule this fair land in the strength of Zeus his father, and men shall rejoice in his righteous sway, and his just and merciful rule.”

Now Acrisius was an evil man and a cruel, and was hated by all around him, and his hard heart grew harder at the prophet's words. And he bade them make a tower of brass, wherein there should be but one heavy door, and he put Danaë therein, and of the door he himself kept the

brazen key. And he laughed in his cruel heart as he thought how he had made impossible the fulfilment of the prophecy of the messenger of Zeus, but Zeus on high Olympus laughed louder than Acrisius, and changing himself into a shower of gold (for all Gods can change themselves into what shape they will) he fell down into Danaë's lap, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her, and she bore a son.



ZEUS.

Then Acrisius the cruel took her, with her fair man-child in her arms, and thrust her into a box, which he bade make just large enough to bear them on the water, and the box was pushed away from the shore, sail-less and rudderless, and it floated out to sea, away from the smiling vale of Argos and the sweet sunlit slopes of Hellas. But Zeus watched over the mother and son, and sent them favoring winds and fair weather, and to Danaë he sent sweet sleep as she floated onwards over the smooth blue sea. And at last the box, drifting, went on shore on the isle called Seriphos, and when Danaë woke she found

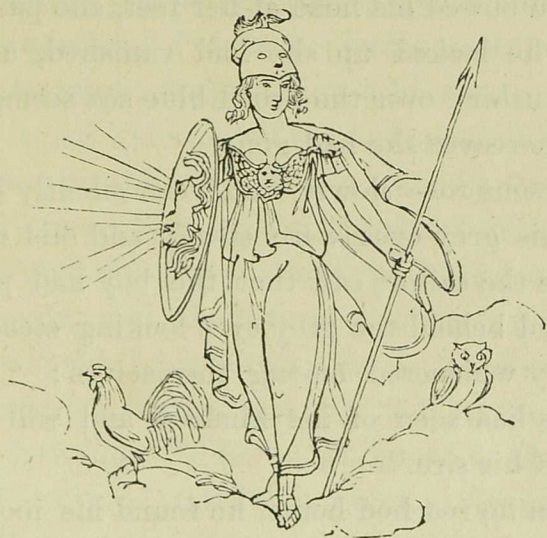
strange faces round her, looking at her with wonder, at this fair white woman whom Neptune has brought to their coasts. And they lifted her out of the box, and brought her to Dictys, the brother of Polydectes, king of Seriphos, and Dictys and his wife took her and her babe home to their hearts, and for fifteen years she dwelt with them, and all loved her for her sweet face and gentle ways.

Now they called the name of the lad so strangely saved from the sea Perseus, and Dictys trained him in all knowledge and wisdom, and in all manly exercises, for the Greeks loved strength and swiftness, and the bold heart, and trained their young men sternly and right well. And Perseus grew towards manhood, beautiful and strong and gentle, and obeyed Dictys in all things, and worshipped Danaë his mother, as did all true sons of Hellas in those simple noble days.

Now Perseus was sent to Samos in a trading vessel, and while he waited there one fair summer day, he rambled on the white cliffs, and lying on the grass there he gazed across the sea which laughed below. And as he looked, behold a wonder ! For swiftly through the air, as though her feet trod the solid earth, glided without step a woman, tall and beautiful ; on her head was a burnished helm, and she carried a long sharp spear in her left hand, while her right hand bore a shield that shone in the sunlight as she came. And beside her floated the sacred birds. Then Perseus knew her for Pallas Athene, and he fell on his face and worshipped her.

Then Pallas spake, and her voice rang like a silver clarion across the sea : " Perseus, two paths lie before you ; choose you which you will tread. On the one walk men base and low, careless of all save themselves. Like

swine they live in plenty and in sloth ; like swine they fatten, lying idly in the sun ; like swine they die and go down into Hades, and their names are forgotten ere they have crossed the Styx. On the other walk the heroes, beloved of Gods and men ; they fight all monsters and all evil things, and rid the land of all tyrants and oppressors ; they are wounded, and they suffer heat and cold, hunger and thirst, weariness and pain ; but at last, when the Fates cut their life-thread, they go open-eyed and fearless to



PALLAS ATHENE.

their end, and their names shine as the stars for ever, to lighten the hearts of living men with the brilliance of noble deeds. Now choose you, Perseus of Argos, choose you which path you will tread."

Then Perseus sprang to his feet with joy, as do all brave young souls touched by the fire of aspiration, and he stretched out his arms to Pallas Athene, and cried aloud : "Let me tread the path of suffering and toil and glory, O Athene, wisest of the Immortals, for to live the

life of the swine is not for men; but the hero who toils for man and wars against all evil things, is noble in his life and honored in his death. Give me work, O Pallas Athene, and prove me now, whether I be hero or swine at heart."

Then Pallas smiled gravely and gently on the youth, and again her words rang out: "Go home, Perseus, and learn a hero's work in doing the labor that is nearest to hand, and in your sorest need cry aloud to me, and I will aid you."

And as he bowed his head at her feet, she passed away, and when he looked up she had vanished, and only a gleam of sunshine over the broad blue sea seemed to mark the road whereover she had gone.

Then Perseus rose slowly, and went silently back to his ship, but his grey eyes were steady and his mouth was firm, and as the sailors saw that the boy had passed into the man, and beheld the grey eyes looking steadfastly out to sea, they whispered among themselves: "Surely the son of Zeus has seen of his kindred, and will prove not unworthy of his sire."

And when he reached home, he found his mother weeping, for Polydectes, the king, had taken her by force from Dictys, and had made her his slave. Then straight to Polydectes he strode, leading his mother by the hand, and in his wrath he spake aloud and rebuked the king for the evil he had done. And when Polydectes drew his sword and would have killed him, he twisted it from his hand and raised it, and for a moment thought to slay the evil king. But he remembered that Dictys had sheltered him, and he would not spill the blood of Dictys' brother; so he mastered his wrath, and broke the sword in twain across his knee, and, throwing the pieces at Polydectes' feet, he

spake no word, but turned, laughing, and went forth, leading his mother with him; and he took her to the temple of Pallas Athene, and bade her serve there till he could bring her home in honor and in safety, and then returned to Dictys' house to see what would befall.

But a few weeks passed over ere the trial of Perseus came. For Polydectes, being an evil man, plotted against the bold youth who had defied him, and when one of his councillors whispered to him: "Send the boy away with charge to bring you back Medusa's head, and you will never see him more," Polydectes lent a ready ear, and rejoiced that he might thus rid him of his foe.

Then he called Perseus to him, and praised his strength and courage, and the skill of his cunning hand, till the young man's heart beat high at the words of praise. And presently Polydectes grew silent, and once or twice he sighed heavily, and then turned aside, saying: "No; to ask him would be sending him to his death." Then Perseus flushed, and cried aloud: "O King, is there aught you would have done? Lo! I am here; send me!" But Polydectes answered craftily, as a man curbs back a willing horse while he spurs it secretly: "Nay, my brave boy, but I spake in thoughtlessness and in folly. No mortal man may dare the toil that lies heavy on my soul." Then Perseus fell at the king's feet, and said: "Now, by Zeus who sits on high Olympus, and by the sacred head of my mother saved from the water by your mother's son, tell me your will, O king, and I will do it or die in the attempt."

Then shot an evil glance forth from the eyes of Polydectes, and he said: "I accept your oath. Know that I yearn for the head of Medusa the Gorgon, once the fairest of all fair women, whose locks are now of hissing serpents,

and whose eyes turn to stone all who dare to meet them. What say you, Perseus the gallant? Will you keep the oath you have sworn, or will you spit on your slave-mother's head?"

Now the cheek of Perseus had turned pale when he heard of the king's wild errand, but at the last words of jeer and scoff he sprang to his feet and spake, for the spirit of Pallas Athene was in him, and his father Zeus gave him courage and a man's heart: "Yea, king, cruel and deceitful, I will keep my oath and the honor of my mother's sacred head. And when I return with the head of the Gorgon, we will see if death has robbed the Medusa-eyes of their power."

And he turned and went out proudly, and, going to the temple of Pallas Athene, he kissed his mother lovingly, but told her no word of his errand, and wended his way down to the sea, and there he took ship and sailed to Samos, and climbed to the high cliff whereto Pallas Athene had come, and he cried aloud across the sea:

"Pallas! Pallas Athene! hear me! In the hour of my sorest need I cry to thee for help!" And seven times he cried aloud, and seven times no answer came to him, save the seamew's shriek and the lapping of the waves below. Then Perseus cried aloud no more, but sat patiently waiting, his face covered with his hands. And presently a cool wind blew upon his face, and looking up he saw the mighty Goddess gazing at him with her keen grey eyes.

Then her voice came like music to his ears: "Lo! Perseus of Argos, I am come at your cry, and the hero's path lies open before you. Long is the way and many the dangers ere you reach the spot where Medusa lies in pain; and when you reach her you must meet the worst danger

of her eyes that turn all living things to stone. And now I must arm you for the conflict. Bind on these winged sandals, the sandals of Hermes, which shall bear you swift as the heron and straight as the shaft of Diana. And gird on the sword that comes from Olympus, which Hephaistos has tempered in his smithy. And on your head place this cap of darkness, the wearer of which can be seen by none, so that you may approach the Gorgon or ever she knows you are there. And on your arm bind fast my brazen shield that reflects all things faithfully and cannot lie, and when Medusa is near, lift up your shield as a mirror and gaze therein, and strike at the image you shall see. Then wrap the accursed head in my sacred goatskin and hie thee back to Seriphos, and place arms and head in my temple there, when Polydectes shall have taken his fill of gazing thereon."

And with these words she vanished, and Perseus, binding on sandals and sword and shield, sprang into the air and flew forwards, as the sandals bore him swiftly above the sea.

So for many a day he journeyed, and bore hunger and thirst, and heat and bitter cold, until at length he reached the awful spot where Medusa lay in pain, and dropped softly through the air behind her that he might not see her eyes. Then he walked slowly round, gazing at his shield, till he saw her face reflected therein, and her locks of venomous snakes, and her awful eyes of anguish and despair. And, shuddering, he struck full at her bare white neck, and the snakes' heads fell down hissing, and the foul black blood poured forth, and he caught the head up and wrapped it in the goatskin hurriedly, and sprang aloft, hard-breathing, into the air.

Now, how Perseus travelled homewards again, how he saved a fair maiden from a huge sea-dragon, how Polydectes and his evil counsellors gazed at Medusa's head and were turned to stone, how he took his mother home and kept her in high honor till her death, how he fought against tyrants, and slew all evil beasts, and gave peace and safety to the people, you may all read in the grand old Grecian tale. So he lived nobly and died calmly, and left his story to be loved by all who admire brave daring and generous deeds.

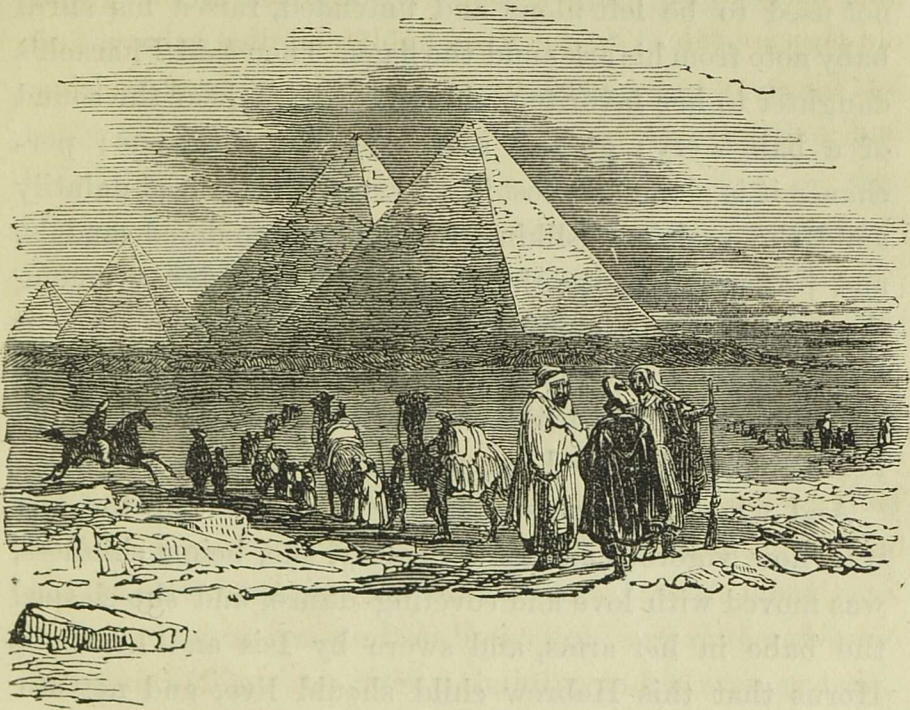
MOSES THE DESTROYER.

THE JEWISH LEGEND.

There was trouble in Egypt amid the captives of the Hebrew race, who toiled beneath the burning African sun, on the burning African sand, building the huge pyramids for their masters, wherein the mighty Pharaohs of the Nile-kingdoms were to be laid in the sleep of death.

It was not the heavy toil, however, nor the burning sun that made the men of the Hebrews murmur, and their women weep. But a dread command had gone forth from Pharaoh the king, and had been proclaimed in every city wherein dwelt members of the captive race: "Every son that is born of the Hebrews shall ye cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive". Therefore was there bitter wailing in every Hebrew home, in that every male child to be born into them should have the night of death enwrap him, just as he opened his eyes to the light of day.

Now there was born unto Amram and Jochebed, his wife, a fair man child, and his mother wept over the baby because of the command of the king that doomed him to death. And she hid her baby from the stern eyes of the Egyptian masters, and for three months he lived in secret, and none knew that a Hebrew boy was growing strong



THE PYRAMIDS.

and beautiful beneath Amram's roof. But as he grew so vigorous that he could no longer be hid, his mother, weeping, wove a box of bulrushes, and when she had made it watertight with slime and pitch she lined it with soft warm wool, and put her baby sleeping therein; and then she carried it to the banks of Egypt's mighty river, and she put it down amid the high-growing flags and flowering rushes, and bidding his sister watch the child, she gat her home and waited to see what should befall.

And Miriam, the girl, stood there watching, and the boy awoke presently and began to stretch his tiny hands towards the waving rushes, as babies will, unknowing distances. And it chanced that the daughter of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, came down with her maidens to bathe in the slowly-flowing waters of the Nile. And the baby, not used to be left alone and untended, raised his shrill baby note from his ark amid the flags. Then said Pharaoh's daughter to her favorite maid: "Hark! I hear the sound of a baby's cry; go and search for the little one; perchance it is alone and lost". Then the maid trod daintily amid the rushes, misliking to wet her broided sandals, and presently she caught sight of the ark lying among them, and crying aloud with astonishment, she drew it out, and, lo! a Hebrew babe. And the woman's heart in her melted, and she lifted out the babe and hushed it on her bosom, and carried it gently to her mistress.

And when Pharaoh's daughter saw how fair the boy was, how vigorous and how healthy, she, being childless, was moved with love and coveting desire, and she clasped the babe in her arms, and swore by Isis and her babe Horus that this Hebrew child should live, and not die. Then Miriam came forth timidly, and fell at the princess's feet, and said: "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?"

And the princess said, "Go!"

Then Miriam fetched the babe's mother, and the good Egyptian princess paid her full wages to nurse and tend her own boy. And they named him Moses—Drawn Out—because he had been drawn out of the water. So Moses grew, and Pharaoh's daughter adopted him for her own son. And she trained him tenderly and educated him

well, and he was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptian sages, and all things that a man should know who is to be reared to rule his brethren and to bear high office in the State. And so the days went on till Moses had grown to man's stature, and the time came when he should pay back in service all the goodness that had reared him and the love that had enwrapt his youth. And going out he saw an Egyptian smite a Hebrew slave, and looking carefully round that none should see him—for he was a coward at heart, as his later life showed—he smote the Egyptian and killed him, and hid his body in the sand. And on the following day, when a Hebrew taunted him that he had slain an Egyptian, Moses feared him, and said: "Surely this thing is known". And Pharaoh heard thereof and was wrath, seeing that he and his daughter had shown so much generous kindness; and Moses ran away and dwelt in a foreign land, and forsook his own race, groaning under their burdens, and also the people whose rulers had adopted him, and among whom he had grown up richly tended and lovingly entreated. But Moses' heart was hard, and cared naught for all the goodness that had been shown to him, and he dwelt unheeding in the strange land, and there he married a wife who bore to him a son. And even when his boy smiled in his face he remembered not his own mother forsaken, nor the Egyptian princess who had dealt with him as with her own child.

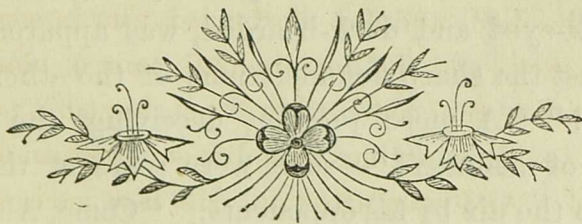
Now Jahveh, the God of the Hebrews, remembered that he had promised to them kingdom instead of slavery, and he made up his mind to free them from their bondage. And he chose Moses as their chief and leader, and after strife between Moses and Aaron (his brother), the magicians of Jahveh, and the magicians of the Egyptian Gods,

Jahveh triumphed gloriously over his enemies, and led his tribe of Hebrews out of Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm.

And for forty years Moses led this tribe, and made for them laws and governed them. But he was cruel and merciless to the Hebrews, as he had been aforetime to the Egyptians, and once, when they worshipped the Bull-God of Egypt instead of the Fire-God of the Hebrews, he induced those nearest to him in blood to arm themselves, while the rest of the people were unarmed and helpless, and they slew no less than 3,000 men. And to the nations around him he was equally cruel, but he ever took good care to keep himself out of the risk and the bloodshed. And he would pretend that it was his part to pray while others shed their blood, and that it was for him to send out the young warriors to the slaughter while he, on a retired mountain, held commerce with his God. And so for forty years he lived and ruled, and blood of men, women, and children, and ashes of burning homes marked his footsteps, whithersoever he went with his savage tribe. And then he died, and Jahveh buried him in a grave that no man knew, and he left behind him a blood-stained memory and a cruel code of laws that kept his people barbarous while other nations round them grew onwards into civilisation. And even after the Hebrew race were scattered, much of his bloodthirsty code lived on and stained the life of the world; and Christian men and women tortured and slew their brethren, because Moses had given wicked laws which bade kill all heretics and unbelievers, and foolish, harmless, so-called "witches". And, indeed, it would have saved the world from much sore and useless misery if Pharaoh's daughter had left the Hebrew child

to drown, as the river rose amid the flags of the Egyptian Nile.

And now, boys and girls, which do you like the better of the twain who were “drawn from the waters”? “They are not real people”, I hear someone say. That is true. Yet a long time ago the Jews believed in the story of Moses, and the Greeks in that of Perseus, equally well. To us they are both legends, but one has in it the cruelty and the superstition that made the Dark Ages in Europe, while the other is full of the hatred of evil and the love of courage, of self-devotion, and of parents, that made the name of Greece so glorious in the history of the world.



The Wandering Jew.

A LEGEND.

THE sun was blazing down on the dusty streets of Jerusalem, and the air was quivering with heat. It was so hot that the pavement seemed to scorch the feet of the passers by, and the gaunt hungry dogs, which were an abomination to the Jews, had not energy enough left to quarrel over the dried-up bones scattered over the arid Golgotha. It was as yet but eight in the morning; what would be the mid-day glow?

Despite the heat, groups of people were standing about the road, arguing and discussing vehemently among themselves, and amid these groups was one of six persons, whose voices rose loud and sharp. A young and handsome man, dark-eyed and dark-bearded, was apparently pleading against the sharp denunciations of the others: "Low impostor!" "A mere juggler, deceiving the people!" "A king of madmen!"—such were some of the epithets flung into the air by his opponents. "Come, Ahasuerus", at last said the eldest of the group, "admit that you no more believe in this madman's claim than we do".

"Believe?" laughed he whom they addressed as Ahasuerus; "I believe? No, verily, but I regret that the poor fool should suffer death for his folly. The cross is an over-hard throne for so harmless a king as he."

As he spoke, yells and shouts were heard in the distance,

and presently sounded the heavy tramp of the Roman soldiery, guarding three prisoners who were evidently being led to execution. Two of them walked doggedly along, stolid and indifferent, carrying the cross-bar to which they would presently be bound. The third, pale and slender, with wan face and pitiful terrified eyes, was dragged on by his guard, as he shrank and shivered before the curses and yells of the crowd. As the procession reached the group of which Ahasuerus was one, the elder man who had addressed him pushed in front to gaze at the unhappy Jesus, and the sway of the crowd pushed the twain forward somewhat roughly, so that the arm of Ahasuerus struck against the cross-bar carried by the prisoner, and the already half-fainting sufferer, over-balanced by the shock, fell heavily to the ground.

An ill-mannered burst of jeering laughter broke from the rough crowd as Jesus fell, and the proud young Pharisee, who had started forward to repair the mischief he had done, weakly shrank back, ashamed of his generous impulse towards an outcast and blasphemer. A keen flash of anger shot from the eyes of the prostrate Jesus as he marked the gesture of withdrawal, and he murmured bitterly: "The curse of Jahveh be on thee, viper and hypocrite; thou shalt seek death, and shalt not find it; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth."

Then the guard closed again round the prisoners, and the crowd surged onwards, till Golgotha, which was close at hand, was reached, and the three were raised on the cruel crosses to await the coming of King Death.

Now, to the suffering and the weary death is sweet, and welcome is the touch that puts an end to pain; but to the young and the happy death is hateful, and Ahasuerus

laughed as he wished lightly that the curse of Jesus could come true, knowing not that, indeed, he was marked out from all men to be untouched by the grim King of Terrors, as the ignorant name Death.

Years passed on, and Ahasuerus had taken to himself a wife, and four fair children had been born to him—two sons, comely as Saul and David, and two daughters, beautiful as the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. A good man was Ahasuerus, and beloved exceedingly of his family and of his neighbors, and his momentary shrinking back from aiding the fallen Jesus had been the weakness of a young man's proud and foolish shyness, and no crime worthy of the curse with which Jesus had smitten it. And now the weight of the curse began to make itself felt.

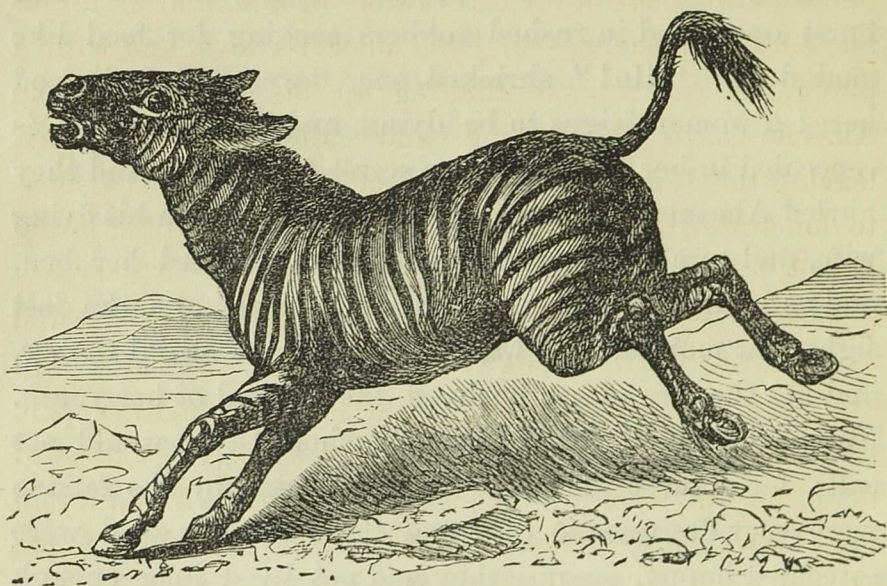
For a long while the Jews, ever a stiff-necked and riotous people, had been chafing against the yoke of the Roman rule, and at last, having broken into open rebellion, they found their city beleaguered by the Roman legions under Titus, and the engines of war trained against the citadel, on which stood their holy temple. Then famine, awful and weird, stalked through the city, and men grew gaunt and women wasted under the pressure of the terrible want. If any morsel of food were by chance found concealed, "the dearest friends fell afighting one with another about it, snatching from each other the most miserable supports of life. . . . Moreover, their hunger was so intolerable that it obliged them to chew everything, while they gathered such things as the most sordid animals would not touch, and endured to eat them; nor did they at length abstain from girdles and shoes; and the very leather which belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed; the very wisps of old hay became food to some."

Then the sweet daughters of Ahasuerus slowly pined away, uncomplaining and smiling on their father to the last; and of his sons one was slain on the third wall by a stone slung by the Romans, and the other perished under the dagger of a Zealot in the outer court of the Temple. And his wife, his beloved, could now scarcely lift her head from her pillow, so weak was she with want and anguish of mind. At last one day, as he knelt beside her bed, his head bowed in agony over her in her dying struggle, the door was burst open, and in rushed robbers seeking for food like mad dogs: "Ho!" shrieked one, "we shall find food here; a woman feigns to be dying, and doubtless food is concealed in her bosom for her secret feasting". And they hurled Ahasuerus aside, and flung themselves on his dying wife, and tore open her linen robe and searched her bed, and as he fainted he heard her death-rattle, and the last sight that met her eyes was the glare of the brutal robber, and not the face of her husband, the beloved of her youth. Yet was she better off than he for whom Death would not call; for "those that were thus distressed by the famine were very desirous to die; and those already dead were esteemed happy, because they had not lived long enough either to hear or see such miseries".

Years passed on, and Ahasuerus, white-headed, lonely, and miserable, prayed in vain for death. Jerusalem was in ashes, and his race scattered. All his friends were dead, and no living face greeted his with friendship. All that made his life was in the grave, and he, a wreck and a skeleton, wandered ghost-like over the tombs of his family and his nation. The curse of Jesus had fallen, and Ahasuerus was alone in a world of strangers.

Then he wandered into the deserts of Arabia, and made

his abode in the wild mountains of that arid land. And one day as he walked he found on his path a zebra colt but two days old, deserted by its mother, and since the gentle heart of mercy in him was not dead, he raised it in his arms and bore it to his cave, and fed it with warm milk from the ass which daily yielded him his food. And he made him a fenced-in plot of pasturage for his captured prize, and fondled it and fed it with his own hands, and at



SIMON THE UNGRATEFUL.

night he led it within his cave and it slept beside his couch; for he said: "The wild thing will learn to love me, and will look at me with eyes that are not strange". Thus for months he tended it, till he believed it tame and faithful, and it would come at his call, and arch its glossy neck under his gentle hand. Then Ahasuerus would almost smile, and his weary, lonely heart found pleasure even in the brute he had saved from death and tended as a child. But one day, in the far distance, rang the trample

of wild hoofs, and Simon, his zebra, threw up his head and listened, and trotted forward a little way and listened yet again. Then Ahasuerus, fearful of losing his pet, ran swiftly to catch and hold it, blaming himself that he had forgotten the wild untameable nature of the zebra tribe, and had left his pet unloosed. But Simon sniffed the air, and he heard the tramp of his kindred, and the smell of the desert steeds was borne to him on the wind; then the inherited instincts of his race awoke in him, and he forgot his master's tendance and his master's love, and with a plunge he turned, and flinging up his heels he smote Ahasuerus to the ground and galloped wildly away, leaving the Jew senseless on the sand, to wake once more to loneliness, unbroken even by the caress of a brute friend.

Years passed on, and generations of men had lived and died, and still Ahasuerus lived, forgotten by death, until at last a weary numbness lapped him, and neither pain nor joy seemed to touch him into real life. He had wandered far and wide over the earth, and with full indifferent eyes he watched the loves and hates, the fears and hopes of men; but they seemed so far away from him in their beautiful common lives and peaceful deaths that he could have no brotherhood with them, nor find in aught of theirs anything that could melt his frozen heart. For Ahasuerus had not yet learned that by losing his life in that of others he might win back something of joy into his own, and that the curse which had been launched at him in hate could only be overcome by love.

During these long years, these long centuries of travel, Ahasuerus had passed through many a peril, and through many an adventure that would have ended in death, could

death have touched him. He had been whelmed under a sand-storm in the desert, and had swooned under the stifling red-hot sand; but alas! he came back painfully to life, and the life stretched out before him as endless as the dry sand all around. He had been wrecked, and had seen his fellows sink down into the green waves to slumber everlasting, but he had been cast up, buffeted and bruised and broken, but still living, on a desert island in the midst of the wild Atlantic waves. He had been lost on the vast steppes of Tartary, and had been left for dead by a horde of Tartars, who had swept by him on their small white steeds, and who had flung their javelins at him in answer to his cry for water, and had galloped on laughing, as they saw him fall pierced by a light sharp spear.

And now he had found his weary way to England, and there had met with but ill welcome and scanty comfort, for the Jews were hated exceedingly by the Christian populace, and small mercy was shown to any who called Abraham their father. Yet when the cruel decree was issued which drove every Jew off English soil, Ahasuerus would not depart; for he said: "What skills it whether I go or stay, since for me all lands are full of weariness, and there is no end to my sorrow?" So he stayed and abode in England, living chiefly in the wild forest lands, afar from the homes of men.

Now it came to the time when Henry IV. was King of England, and when for the first time stakes were lighted on English soil at which they burned men's bodies living, that they might save their souls when dead. And Ahasuerus stood in the midst of the crowd in London town and saw poor William Sautré burned alive, while Christian priests stood around him and a Christian mob shouted and jeered.

Then a look of grief and painful memory came over the worn face of the deathless man, and he murmured as he turned away: "Verily times are changed, but men remain the same; I bethink me when crowds like these jeered and yelled at the very man in whose name they burn this man to-day".

And then, because he was weary and thirsty, he sat him down by a well, and by-and-bye a maiden came singing to draw water, and gazed timidly and curiously, as a fawn gazes, longing to draw near, yet fearing peril in the approach. And as he lifted on her his eyes, behind which an eternal sadness dwelt, he started, and he thought: "Surely the eyes of my Salome look at me from the sweet face of this young girl". And back upon him like a torrent swept the memory of his youth, and of the days when he walked with his beloved beneath the whispering grey leaves of the olive-trees near Bethany, and the leaves chanted to them low of the eternity of love, and never a word of the eternity of life; while lo! to him love had been so fleeting, while life, like a sluggard, would not move from his tired heart. And as he remembered the wife of his youth, Ahasuerus bowed over the wall of the silent well, and he shook as shakes an oak of Lebanon when the storm-wind sweeps across the Syrian sea.

Then all fear left the girl's sweet heart, for here was one who was sad, and whom she might comfort, and she drew near and laid her little hand on the bowed-down head. "Stranger", she said, and her voice was as the sound of a Syrian viol, sweet and full and clear, "you are in trouble. Can I do aught for your relief?" And she drew the cool pure water, and bathed his throbbing head and his tired arid eyes. And afterwards, each

day she would come to the woodland well, and Ahasuerus would meet her there, and would tell her stories of far-off lands, and of wondrous adventures and perilous escapes, and would bring her from time to time strange jewel or curious web of eastern lands, to please her girlish pride. Now this sweet Editha was orphaned, and lived in a lonely cottage near at hand with her grandfather, who was old and blind. And it chanced that on one day she failed in her tryst, and on a second and a third she was not there. And on the fourth, as Ahasuerus sat there, feeling for the first time for many a hundred years a chill aching pain that cramped his heart, and thinking, "She is gone, like all the rest", Editha was seen coming down the glade, not blithely, as was her wont, but full sadly, for she was weeping as she came. Yet Ahasuerus felt at the sight of her a throb that he would have thought was one of joy, had not joy and he so long been strangers that he scarcely could remember how it felt. And Editha told him how, two days since, in the evening-tide, her grandfather had suddenly fallen, and when she ran to lift him he was dead, and now she was alone, "all alone in this wide world".

Alone?—the word went to his heart like a stab. And now from the pain he knew his heart had awaked, though he doubted of the joy, and the pain grew keener as he contrasted his awful age and this fair bright youth, though he knew that she dreamed not of the years that lay behind him. And when Editha moaned amid her sobs: "I have none to care for me now but you", he clasped his arms round her, and whispered he would care for her and guard her life if she would join with it her own. And so they two were wed, and Editha wist not that

her husband was other than he seemed, a somewhat stern and elderly man.

But to him she had brought back life, and he felt with a strange sweet delight that now again he could feel both joy and pain, and that some share of the common lot was again at last his own. Alas! the new delight lasted for brief space, for, having been drawn back to the abodes of men, one day the eye of the village priest fell on him, and the priest knew him not, and spoke to him with angry suspicion. And he carelessly, forgetting the cruel laws that men had made, answered that he worshipped not in the Christian church. Then the angry priest bade them seize the infidel, and clap him into the village stocks, while he sent to the neighboring town to give warning of the heretic he had found.

Then they flung him on the ground, and, raising his feet above his head, thrust them through the holes, and left him there, with three others who shared his punishment, but in lighter form, for one was a murderer, and one a thief, and one had forged his father's name, but he was a vile infidel, who had blasphemed the Christian faith. And in those days, as now, it was deemed worse to think differently from one's neighbor, than to kill, or rob, or forge. For ever has the true Christian punished heresy as worse than crime.

From the stocks Ahasuerus was carried into prison, and after trial and torture he was sentenced to death. And oh! what was his agony and despair when they led him out to die, and he found that he was not alone in the rough cart, but there was lifted in beside him his Editha, who was marked as a convicted witch to death by flames. And she, instead of weeping, was joyous, in that, as she

whispered, death should not part them ; but he shuddered, for he feared that his darling would die *alone*.

As they went, the cruel priest who had brought them to this pass urged on them ceaselessly to kiss the cross and to believe in Christ. And Ahasuerus smiled mockingly at the priest and his toy, and at last bade him grimly leave in peace the burnt offerings he was carrying to his God.

And so they fared forward to the stake, and bound them side by side to the central post and heaped the faggots round them. Then Ahasuerus, who had stealthily loosed one hand, slipped it into his bosom as the smoke rolled thickly around them, and drawing out a tiny ball placed it in Editha's mouth, and, bidding her bite it, breathed a passionate farewell. And in that ball was a subtle Eastern poison, and with a shiver she was dead, and spared the agony of the flames. But they rolled up round her husband, scorching, searing, till he swooned with agony and hung as dead. Then burst over the common where the stake had been raised a fearful storm. And the fierce lighting and the pouring rain drove away both guards and people, and mist and fog swept across the plain. And Ahasuerus awoke again, to find himself lying on the half-burned faggots, awoke to agony of pain, and, worse than pain, to life; while beside him lay the scorched body of his beloved, whom merciful Death had taken, while he was left again alone.

Years passed on, and again generations of men lived and died, and still Ahasuerus lived, forgotten by death; but since the old weary numbness had been healed by Editha's love, he had never fallen back into that death in life which had passed away for ever when love had touched him into self-forgetfulness, and he had placed in Editha's

mouth the poison that would have saved him from the agony of the flames, had he thought of himself first, ere shielding his beloved. And indeed, since he had roused himself into love of a woman, the old dull weariness had passed out of life, for love is the true savior of men, and those who love loyally enter the "earthly paradise".

But even yet in this love of Ahasuerus for Editha was there touch of selfishness, as in all save the noblest human love. One stage higher yet had this man to climb, ere he touched the sacred portal on the other side of which was rest. And it came on this wise.

One day Ahasuerus wandered along the streets of London, no longer with dull indifference, but with eyes soft with sympathy for human grief, and in their depths a sorrow which none might share. And he wandered on till the evening darkened round him, and still onwards, until at last the hour came at which the gin-palaces and the public-houses were closed, and the narrow streets in which he found himself were filled with a tossing crowd of half-drunken men and women. Ahasuerus looked at these poor unfortunates with eyes luminous with pity and with sorrow, and both deepened as the eyes rested on a group of man, woman, and child, a father, mother, and daughter. The father was mad with drink, the mother helpless, and the little child, with its violet eyes terror-widened, its sweet curled mouth down-drawn in grief, clung sobbing to the ragged skirt of the miserable mother, shrinking from the voice and gesture of the poor wretch whom she called "daddy", in broken babyish appeal. There was a delay, a brawl, a sudden heavy blow, a falling woman, a child crushed in the falling, a confusion of crowding sightseers, a policeman seizing a maddened man, some rough but

kindly hands lifting a fainting woman—and Ahasuerus had gently raised the broken blossom of a child and had quietly carried away the helpless waif, unknowing whether it were alive or dead. None cared; none noticed. A few weeks later, and the mother was dead, the father suffering a sentence of penal servitude, and the poor child, orphaned and alone, remained in the gentle hands that had rescued her, and there was none to say: "Yield her to me, for she is mine". And in good sooth—though this was known to none save to the dead and the felon—this sweet child was none of theirs, but was a baby stolen from a pure and honest home, where mourning had been worn for five years for a babe that had vanished and had left no trace.

So Ahasuerus kept the little one, and he named her Editha Salome, remembering in his faithful heart the two fair women whom he had loved in the bygone time. And the child grew, and became sweet as a violet, pure as a snowdrop, and she grew into fairest maidenhood, unsullied by an evil thought, unawed by a fear. Thus she developed into womanhood, and her violet eyes were as frank and innocent as when she had numbered but seven years, and the broad white brow and square lines of chin told of brain to think and firmness to endure.

And slowly in the heart of Ahasuerus there grew up a love for this peerless maiden that was love of father and brother and lover in one, and his whole heart fixed itself on this child he had saved, this maiden he had trained, this woman he worshipped. And the time came when he told the sweet lassie of his love, and innocently, trustfully, she put her hand in his and promised, unknowing, a faith and love of whose meaning she had not dreamed.

And now the spring months, ripening into summer,

brought with them in their ending a youth, fair and strong, into the village in which dwelt Ahasuerus and the maiden he had reared. And one morning, very early—ere yet the dewdrops had stolen all the fairy seven colors from the grass-blades and had left them only green for adornment—Editha wandered over the daisy-starred meadows, and met this youth, Reginald, on his morning stroll. Little worth to trace how meeting led to acquaintance, and acquaintance to love, until the hour came when the sweet violet eyes grew dull with pain, and the soft round cheeks were feverish with the passion that adored and the resolution that denied. Little worth to trace the slow agony of Ahasuerus, who saw his love won from him, and knew that the pallid cheeks and the sweet wistful eyes told him of the loyalty of years struggling against the passion of a month, and of the resolute honor that kept pure its faith though the gentle heart should break in the determination to be true.

He saw. And for awhile he wrapped himself up in sore grief and pain, and wrestled with his own heart for mastery. Then at length the strife was over, and with the victory that gave Editha to her lover, and accepted loneliness for himself, a strange languor crept over frame and thought.

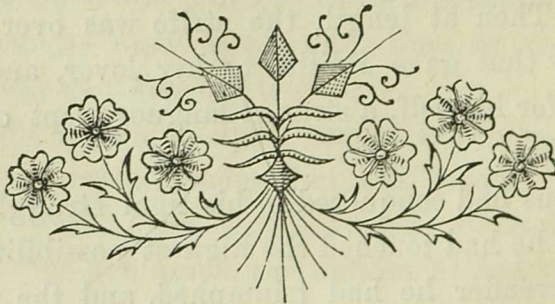
Ahasuerus had conquered in his final struggle. In renunciation he had touched the highest possibility of man. In his surrender he had triumphed, and the fair grave face of Death shone on him out of the darkness. Love at its noblest brought him rest, and the curse of the Nazarene was broken.

He called to him his darling; he told her of her discovered secret, of his grateful recognition of her loyal

struggle, of his full approval of her choice, of his blessing on her love. The wondering violet eyes were raised, dew-laden, and flashed into glorious beauty, as though the sun-rays had touched them. Ahasuerus raised his voice, and at the call Reginald entered, pure-faced, upright, strong—fit mate for the maiden he loved.

There was a pause. Ahasuerus seemed to have grown very old; his eyes were dim, but on his face rested a strange, silent, massive calm. His voice sounded out for the last time on earth, as he clasped together the hands of the woman he loved and surrendered, and of the man, his rival, whom he crowned; the last words were words of blessing, and they slew the words of the curse that had pursued him.

The Wandering Jew was dead.



T A L E S .

The Story of Hypatia.

THE sun was sinking behind the great library of Alexandria, and burnishing into dazzling brilliancy the wide blue waters of its bay, as a girl, golden-haired and grey-eyed, sat alone in a large and richly-furnished room, gazing through the pillars at the glancing wavelets of the sea. Beautiful she was, with a grave serenity that lent to her dignity beyond her years, and the beauty of face and figure was set off by the pure white of the trailing gold-edged robe which fell round her feet, and the gleaming golden girdle that clasped her slim round waist. Her day-dream was broken by the sound of an approaching foot-fall, and she rose as the curtain was lifted, and an aged but still vigorous man, white-haired, white-bearded, entered the room and gave gentle greeting to his only child.

“Hast thou thought, my daughter, of the matter whereof we spoke this morning?” he said as he came forward.

“Yes, my father,” spoke the girl, in a full soft tone that fell on the ear like a caress. “I am ready to do thy will.”

A smile of gratified pride and pleasure irradiated the old man's face, softening the somewhat stern lines of brow and chin.

"It is well, Hypatia," he answered. "So shall my waning strength lean on thy young fresh power, and my pupils shall learn yet more swiftly from the lips of the brightest ornament of my school."

And then Theon, the famous mathematician, who had raised to unrivalled position the noble Platonic school of Alexandria, drew his child down beside him on the soft rich cushions whereon she had been sitting awaiting his coming, and they talked long and earnestly of the morrow's work. For on the morrow Hypatia was to take her place as teacher in the great Platonic school, and to face the youth of Alexandria for the first time as preceptress. And well was she fitted for that task; for she was versed in all the knowledge of her day, and none could teach her aught in geometry or in astronomy, or in the science of the time. And so deeply had she drunk of the springs of "divine philosophy" that she seemed to those who had been her instructors to be Platonism itself incarnate, and it was thought no shame to ask her to teach in the mighty school wherein Ammonius and Hierocles had held sway, and to which came students from Greece, and from imperial Rome itself.

And truly Hypatia justified the faith of her father and of her tutors, for we read that "her fame became so great that the votaries of philosophy crowded to Alexandria from all parts". And so pure was she, so gentle and yet so proud, that no word of blame or censure was ever heard against her in the market-place or in the baths of Alexandria.

Unhappily it chanced at that time that the patriarchal chair of Alexandria was filled by a bishop named Cyril, a man haughty and bitterly intolerant. He was surrounded by hordes of savage monks and priests, who fanned the gloomy fire of his hatred against all noble learning and scientific thought. And as the fame of Hypatia's learning spread abroad, and the youth of Alexandria crowded more and more into her lecture-room, and as some who had been attendants at the churches now gathered in the hall where she taught the Platonic philosophy, Cyril determined in his dark mind that this rival should be destroyed, and should no longer be allowed to shed abroad the rays of the pure light of knowledge.

And first he tried to convert her to his gloomy faith, for greater than the triumph of slaying her would have been the triumph of immuring her bright keen brain in the dungeon of superstition, and of quenching the glory of her intellect under the extinguisher of faith. But the "load of learning" which she "bore lightly as a flower" made it impossible for her to pass through the narrow barbaric gate of his creed, and her keen dialectic exposed the clumsy sophisms of the monks he sent to convert her. Then he determined that she should die, and calling to him Peter the Reader, a sour and brutal fanatic, he bade him take with him a band of the roughest and wildest of the savage monks, and slay "this child of the devil", even as she was returning from her daily task of lecturing in the schools.

So Peter went forth and whispered first to one and then to another, and he told how Hypatia was followed by a devil wherever she went, and how this devil gave her her beauty and her cunning tongue; and how she was destroy-

ing the souls of the simple Alexandrian people by her blasphemies and her false philosophy. And gradually the throng of monks grew larger and larger, and Peter deftly led them to a narrow street through which Hypatia must pass. And many of them had in their hands large oyster shells, for a whisper had gone round that the witch's flesh should be scraped off her bones, so that none of her incantations should avail to save her.

And now, see, a young monk comes running swiftly, and gasps as he runs, "She is close at hand". And in a moment her chariot appears, and the fair face is still glowing with the excitement of oratory, and the deep eyes are luminous with the glory of the mind. And now a cry and a surge forward of the crowd and Hypatia's chariot is surrounded by fierce faces and tossing arms, and in a moment the horses are stopped, and as she rises, startled, from her seat, the wiry arms of Peter drag the girl down brutally. Her dream is broken, and for the reverent faces of her listeners she sees the fierce swarthy faces of the Thebaid monks, and as she glances over the howling crowd not a friendly eye meets hers.

"To the Church! to the Church!" cry the torturers, "and let us offer the witch before the High Altar of our God!" And Peter rushes onwards, dragging the half-fainting girl, and the monks surge onwards also, with many a curse and prayer. And now the great Church of Alexandria is reached, and up the aisles, on to the very steps of the high altar, from which the crucified Christ looked down on his worshippers, Peter, panting and furious, dragged his unresisting victim. There for an instant Hypatia shook herself free, and looked over the tossing sea of arms and faces, and opened her mouth as though to

speak. Her white robe was stained and soiled with that terrible journey, but her face was sweet and serene and strong, and her voice rolled out melodiously over the throng of her foes. But scarcely had the tones rung round the Church, when Peter, fearing that her eloquence might turn the mob from his purpose, yelled out :

“She is a witch ! a witch ! do not listen to her sorceries. I see the devil at her ear, whispering to her. She is a witch !”

And flinging himself on her, he rent her robe from neck to hem, and tore wildly at her clothes, till they fell in ribbons at her feet, and the tall white girl’s form stood naked, dazzling as snow, before the golden altar. And a cry burst from her lips at last, as she stood thus bare before that brutal throng.

And the great dumb Christ looked on.

Then the monks flew at her and beat her, and wrenched out handfuls of her glorious golden hair, and tore her flesh with their nails like wild beasts. And those with shells scraped away her flesh till the bones were visible, and all her body was one gaping dreadful wound. Then they tore her limb from limb, and cried to bring fire to burn the witch to ashes.

And the great dumb Christ looked on.

And at last they gathered wood outside the door, and flung the pieces of her body on the pile, and set a light to it, and sang hymns round the witch’s funeral fire, until nought but ashes were left, and these they scattered to the wind and went home rejoicing in their evil work.

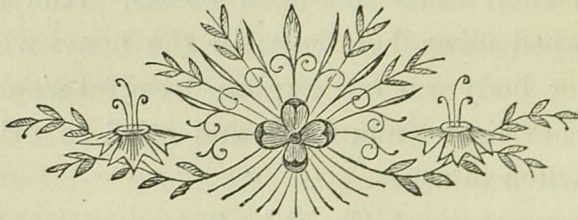
And that night Cyril slept soundly, for his rival would no longer draw away his hearers. And Peter slept deeply, for he had drunk himself stupid after his crime. But

many of the monks had troubled dreams, and wondered whether indeed their day's work were a righteous one.

And in the dark Church there were pools of blood, and remnants of human flesh and tangled golden hair.

And the great dumb Christ looked on.

But on that figure of the Christ a splash of blood had fallen as the murderers tore at their prey, and not all the fourteen centuries, that have passed since then, have availed to wash from the Christ that splash of Hypatia's blood.



The Story of Giordano Bruno.

A BOY was lying on a vine-clad hill, looking dreamily over the blue Mediterranean sea. As he lay there he could see the beautiful Bay of Naples, curving inwards to the fair city; and behind him rose, stern and forbidding, the mountain of Vesuvius, sending its dark smoke up into the stainless purity of the sky. One of the loveliest scenes that Italy, or that perhaps even the world, could offer was spread before his eyes; but the boy, readily sensitive as he generally was to all beauty of form and color, to-day seemed indifferent to it all, and the large eyes, "full of speculation", were blind to the landscape he knew and loved so well.

For the lad was on the verge of a grave decision; should he or should he not bid farewell to the brightness of his youth, and shut himself up within the grey walls of a Dominican monastery, there to devote himself to study and to the search after truth? Monk or soldier, it seemed, he must be. The times were rough and violent, and there was no chance for peaceful study save under the garb of the monk. Besides, Nature herself seemed as uneasy and troubled as the States of Italy. In the quaint words of an old chronicler, there were "earthquakes, inundations, eruptions, famine, and pestilence; in that troublous time creation itself seemed to violate its own laws". And the boy was fanciful and superstitious, and he thought that

perhaps the monastery would be the spot most approved of by his God amid such troubles. But most of all, Learning seemed to beckon him; for within the monastery were books, and ancient manuscripts, and wonderful parchment rolls that he could not yet decipher, but which Father Anselm had promised him that he should understand, if he donned the garb of the monk and took the vows of St. Dominic on him. His pulse beat more quickly and the color glowed on his dark cheeks as he thought of all he might learn and the knowledge he might master, as with some the pulse would beat in dreaming of gay frolic, and the color glow with thought of some bright scene of festivity or of love. And when Giordano Bruno rose from the hill-side his mind was made up, and he had resolved to enter the Dominican monastery, for there he fancied that Learning should be his comrade, and Truth itself should lift her veil before his eager reverent eyes.

"You have been long, Giordano, and it grows late," said his mother tenderly, as the lad entered his lowly home in the little town of Nola. "And your uncle has been awaiting you, and has gone away sore vexed. For he says that now you are a strong lad and a tall, it is time that you should throw away the books you are ever poring over, and should learn to carry arms, as befits a gallant lad."

"Mother," the boy answered gently, "I shall never carry arms, nor go out to rob and kill my fellows at the order of some idle noble. I have resolved to go to the Dominican monastery, where I have long been for study under Father Anselm, and the good monk has promised that he will teach and train me, if I will promise after awhile to take the vows of the order, and become one of the brethren there. And, truly, to me it is a nobler life to

study and learn what wise men have written, than to put on casque and haubert and go slay poor simple folk who have done no wrong to any."

"But your uncle, my son, your uncle," urged the mother, anxiously. She had long known that her son cared for the study rather than for the street, and was therefore in no wise surprised at his words; but she feared lest his uncle should be wrath, and deal harshly with her fatherless boy.

"My uncle may fight as he will," laughed the boy merrily, "and scold as he will, too, so you be not angry or grieved, sweet mother mine." And he twined his arms lovingly round his mother's shoulder, and kissed away her tremors and her anxieties, till she sat down happily to supper, content in her heart of hearts that her darling should escape from the turmoil of that dangerous time, and should grow into a reverend monk like Father Anselm, or one of the grave brethren of the famous monastery to which he belonged. But no such monk as one of those, poor anxious mother, shall be that gallant-hearted, passionate, eager lad of yours. Oh, could you have read his fortune on that summer evening, I doubt whether you would not have chosen for him the rough toils and perils of the soldier's life, rather than that seemingly peaceful one which opened as the monastery gate rolled back to let in the future monk, and which ended on the field of flowers in Rome, long ere the full life had begun to sink into old age. But that future was hidden from her loving eyes, and she bade farewell to her boy, sadly indeed, but yet resignedly, as he set forth to his new home, and plunged into the new studies with all the eagerness of his fiery youth, with all the passion of his warm Italian heart.

And there for some years he studied, and when the due time arrived he took the vows of the Dominican order, and clad himself in the monk's frock. But Father Anselm, who loved him, and who marvelled at his keen wit and his strong subtle thought, would oftentimes shake his head gravely, and sigh: "I fear me that that keen head will not rest easy under the cowl, and that that strong brain will bring its owner into trouble". And he would try to check the young man's eager questioning, and to dull his ardor after study, for he thought that there was peril in the future, in those days of growing heresy, for a youth who would never accept an answer to a question if the answer would not bear investigation, and who must ever be probing the old truths and the old beliefs, and refusing to accept as certain all that holy Church taught and all the traditions of Rome.

"My son, my son," the gentle old monk would say, "you seek to know too much. There is danger in your endless questionings and in your desire to be wise above that which is written. Read your breviary, and chant your offices, and leave Copernicus and his dreams alone. Does not Holy Writ declare that God 'has fixed the round earth so fast that it cannot be moved', and did not Joshua call on the sun to stand still, a command which would have been absurd had the sun been stationary, as Copernicus suggests? The book tells us distinctly that 'the sun stood still', and it must, therefore, have been moving before. Giordano, Giordano, my son, your questionings will lead into heresy, if you be not careful, and the Holy Inquisition has arguments that I would be loth to see applied to my favorite pupil."

Then Bruno would kiss the old man's hand, and say

some light word to comfort him ; but alone he would pace up and down his narrow cell, struggling, thinking, wondering, praying for a light that never came in answer to his prayer, and longing to be free of the narrow round of his monastic duties, and to share in the intellectual struggle, the sounds of which he heard from afar, the struggle raging in every University of Europe between the old order and the new, between the philosophy of the past and the thought of the present. The young lion found his cage too narrow for him, and the confinement began to gall.

In that monastery library Bruno found a danger that had been missed by the careless monks around him ; he tells us that “ after having cultivated literature and poetry for a long time, my guides themselves, my superiors and my judges, led me to philosophy and free enquiry ”. But what place had philosophy and free enquiry within the walls of an Italian monastery, and what greater danger could befall a man than to find such things as these ? At that time Aristotle was supreme in the Christian Church, and Bruno, preferring the philosophy of Pythagoras and of Plato, soon found himself in conflict with his teachers. Pythagoras had taught that the sun was the centre of our system, and that the earth was but a planet revolving round it, and, Pythagorean student as he was, Giordano naturally followed the teaching of Copernicus on the same subject, despite all that Father Anselm could urge. And, indeed, Giordano had latterly shunned the kind old monk, being unwilling to give him needless pain, and yet more unwilling to seem to be less than true.

For some weeks past Father Anselm had noticed that evil glances were being thrown on his favorite pupil, and

he had caught one or two muttered phrases that alarmed him for his safety. A witty pasquinade, entitled "Noah's Ark", had been written by the young monk, and had given sore offence in the monastery, for in it he, under a thin veil of allegory, mocked at the luxury and ignorance of the monkish orders, and the lash of his sarcasm had curled round and stung some of the brethren in his own monastery, and bitter complaint had been made to the Prior that this young critic of monkish ways needed a lesson to teach him to keep that gibing tongue of his from slandering his elders and superiors. At last the word "heretic" began to be bandied about freely from mouth to mouth, and whispers circulated that the Prior would soon take measures to teach the malapert monk to mend the error of his ways. And one afternoon, as Bruno lay idly in the vineyard adjoining the garden of the monastery, he saw Father Anselm approaching with hurried steps and troubled countenance, and rising, he went to meet him and asked him gently what was amiss. The old man sank down on the sunny slope, well-nigh breathless with his haste and the grief that oppressed him, and Bruno waited patiently till he had recovered power of speech, and Anselm said :

"Giordano, my son, danger is around you. Your foolish talk about the earth moving, and of the inhabitants of other worlds than this, which you insanely pretend are among the stars above our heads, has reached the Prior's ears. Father Jerome, who thought you aimed at him in that biting jest of yours on the swine saved by Noah in the ark, has whispered in the Prior's ear that you are a heretic, dangerous to the good name of the monastery in the country round, and the Prior, who is, as you know, a

good man, but withal somewhat narrow-minded in his faith—and truly he is blessed therein, in that it saves him from many anxious questionings of the doctrines of Holy Church—has taken alarm, and is minded to question you before the brethren touching your rejection of Aristotle, and your belief in these new-fangled theories of Copernicus. I fear me lest —— ”

“Fear nothing,” said the young monk, proudly, springing to his feet, and tossing back his head with a gesture of bright self-confidence that beseemed him well; “Fear not for me, father, for I fear not for myself.”

“And therefore do I fear, my son,” answered sadly the elder monk. “Satan triumphs most easily over those that have not the ‘spirit of holy fear’. Your speculations are too bold, and you cannot have weighed well all that is implied in the idea of this firm world of ours revolving in space. Where do you believe hell is, and where the souls of the lost, and the devils chained in darkness, in this new universe of yours, that has neither top nor bottom.”

“Truly,” said Bruno, laughing softly, “I have not troubled my brain much with such Satanic geography, and there can indeed be no ‘under the earth’, now that we know that it is ever turning in its journey round the sun.”

“Hush, hush, my son!” the old man said hastily, crossing himself as he spoke. “Beware lest Satan himself come to show you the way to the prison beneath the earth, whence none goeth forth. But bethink you: whither went the blessed Lord when he ascended, going upwards, as we read, from the surface of this earth, and being received into heaven. How could he ascend from a whirling globe, and in what direction went he when he was, as Holy Writ tells us, taken *up*? Tush, tush, my son, your

fancies are blasphemous absurdities, and were they true the cardinal doctrines of our holy faith would become impossible, which may the blessed Virgin and the saints forefend." And again he crossed himself piously as he spoke.

A strange and subtle smile flitted over Bruno's mouth at the last sentence of the simple father, and he opened his lips to answer. But ere a word was uttered he checked himself, thinking: "Of what avail to shake the old man's faith?" So he spoke no word, but looked across the sea, his deep eyes full of search and longing, and of unsatisfied yearning after certainty of truth.

"Giordano!" again said the old monk, "listen to me. You are young and brave, but your youth and your courage will not avail you in to-morrow's strife. I shall have to do heavy penance for my warning, but warn you of your peril I will, at whatever risk. They are plotting to catch you in your answers, that they may stamp you heretic; and I know—" the trembling voice sank into a whisper—"I know that a messenger has gone to the Holy Office at Naples, and the inquisitor will be here to-morrow to ——"

The bright listening face blanched for a moment, but then the mobile lips grew firm and set, and Bruno laid his hand gently on his friend's arm.

"What would you have me do, my father? You would not have me lie, even to escape the terrors of the Holy Office?"

"Fly! fly!" the old man whispered. "Fly while there is yet time. Oh, my son! I would not see your young limbs broken on the rack, your young face writhen with pain! Oh! I have seen—I have seen ——" The good

monk's voice failed him, and he broke down in strong emotion; and then, hearing steps coming in the direction of the vineyard, he rose and went hastily away.

For an hour Giordano Bruno sat where his friend had left him, still seemingly gazing idly across the sea. But his heart was full of warring, surging thoughts, as he strove to judge his danger, and the best way of swift escape. Presently the light came back to his eyes, the smile to his lips, and he leapt to his feet. "Good fathers all," he said, merrily, "I leave Noah's Ark to-night; for I fear it is no longer an ark of safety for me."

So that night, when all were sleeping round him, Giordano Bruno rose silently from his pallet, and after listening a few minutes to see that none were stirring save himself, he unwound a rope which he had coiled round his waist beneath his monkish frock, and knotting one end tightly to the bar of his window, he slipped out through the narrow opening and slid swiftly to the ground, and struck off across the country northwards, his heart bounding with his new liberty, and his young limbs rejoicing in the strain of his rapid flight. And it was well he fled; for the messenger to the Holy Office returned with tidings that ere day dawned the familiars would be at the monastery, and that they would seize the young rebel and take him to Naples instantly, and that the questioning should be done at the hall of the Holy Office itself. But when they came, those terrible bloodhounds of the Inquisition, they found an empty cell, whence the victim had escaped; and they were fain to be content with excommunicating him—delivering him over, body and soul, to the devil; while he, rejoicing in his strength, set his face northwards towards the Appennines.

Forward and northwards ever went the fugitive monk, generally on foot, but now and then getting a lift from a friendly traveller, wending his way in the same direction. When he approached a town, being afraid of being questioned, he usually hid till the evening fell, and then during the darkness slipped past unnoticed, as though he had committed some crime and were fleeing from the hands of justice. For it is one of the evils of superstition that in countries where it is powerful it treats honest men as criminals and criminals as honest men, provided only that the criminals are devout, and obey the clergy, and frequent the church. Until Christianity became softened and liberalised by Freethought, it was safer in every country of Christendom to be a murderer or a thief than to be a heretic. For the murderer and the thief could buy forgiveness and safety by gold and by prayer, whereas the heretic found the rack and the stake the penalty for pure life and honest speech.

At last Giordano saw the white tops of the mountains which divide Italy from the fair Swiss land, and knowing that Switzerland had to a great extent thrown off allegiance to Papal Rome, and that the Protestant Reformers there dwelt in safety and in honor, he dreamed that when he crossed that mountain barrier he would be free to breathe in safety, far from the grim clutch of the Inquisition. Ah, Bruno! you have to learn that hatred of science and persecuting zeal are not the marks of one Christian sect more than of another, but are of the very essence of the Christian faith itself. As well seek for a blind man who can see, as for a Christian who can respect the freedom of thought of a heretic.

Up the steep sides of Mont St. Bernard he climbed, and

he reached the top as soon as the sun began to sink; he stood and looked across the plain of Italy, billowing far beneath his feet, and as he looked the Italian heart in him melted, and he sank on his knees and stretched out his arms towards the wide landscape, glowing in the radiance of the setting sun :

“Italy! Italy!” he cried aloud, and the hot tears rolled down the brave young face, writhen now with pain; “Italy! Italy! my beautiful, my beloved! chained as Prometheus on the mountain peak, thou who hast brought to men the living fire, stolen from the burning heart of Nature, the divine, the self-sufficing, the mother of all; as Prometheus torn by vulture beak, torn by Pope and priest, yet as Prometheus undying, and looking for the redemption that shall be! Italy! I fly from the devils incarnate, made by Christianity out of men; shall I ever come back to thee, to live and die in thee? Hast thou for me a home and a refuge; or, my Italy, hast thou only a grave?”

O Giordano Bruno! noble son of Italia degraded; thy Italy has for thee no home or refuge; thy Italy has for thee not even a grave. Italian winds shall scatter thy ashes far and wide over Italian soil, and those ashes shall be the seeds that, after two centuries, shall bloom into flowers of memory and gratitude for thee!

His last farewell to Italy spoken, Bruno turned his back resolutely on the land which the Inquisition was searing, and slowly paced along the path which led to the Hospice of St. Bernard. As he turned the corner which shut out Italy, he came in sight of the long low building, sheltered from the wild winds and nestling beneath a guardian crag. No possibility was there that he should

pass unseen that hospitable door, for already the dogs had scented his approach, and the deep bay of twenty noble animals welcomed the wanderer to the refuge of all travellers through the pass. But Bruno dared not enter a dwelling where his tonsure would tell of the profession he had rejected, and where he would find it hard to parry the curious questions of his hosts, so when he reached the Hospice door, he prayed but for a crust of bread and a drink of thin red wine, and, urging that his business forced him to haste onwards, despite the growing darkness, he started again on his way, down the path that led to the valley far below. Four or five of the dogs escorted him on his road until he reached the limit of the snow, and then, with a deep bay of farewell, they turned homewards again, leaving him to pursue, with lightened heart—since now indeed he was in Switzerland—his steep and slippery way. Downwards and downwards ever, till he reached the refuge of St. Pierre, and there, wearied out, he craved a night's lodging, and slept his first really fearless sleep since he had quitted his monastery cell.

Far into the next day he slept, and at length awoke refreshed and vigorous, and started once more, still downwards, though the path was now less steep and rugged than it had been before. And thus on till the vale was reached, and on till he passed by the Tête Noire to Chamonix, and saw the mighty stainless head of Mont Blanc rise pure and dazzling against the clear blue sky. And onwards still, through a land now less stern and grand, but not less beautiful, until the broad waters of Lake Lemman smiled at the weary traveller, and until at length he reached the fair city stretched beside the lake, and the

walls of Geneva rose before him, the refuge to which his thoughts had pointed since he swung himself downwards from the window of his cell.

Fearlessly, with head erect, he passed into the famous city, the City of Calvin and of Beza. Calvin indeed was dead—he had died in 1564, and it was now 1580—but Calvin's spirit still dominated the city in which he had ruled supreme. At first Bruno found welcome from the Genevan Reformers, for they regarded him only as rebel to Rome, and dreamed not that the soaring spirit of this young man, now but thirty years of age, had broken not the fetters of Rome, but the fetters of Christianity, and that Calvin's narrow theology could no more hold him captive than could the statelier creed of Rome. For awhile, however, brief rest was his, until that warrior spirit of his, ever longing for battle with its peers, flung itself into hot controversy over the old quarrel with the philosophy of Aristotle. Just as Aristotle had become the pillar of orthodoxy in the Catholic Church, so did Aristotle also rule unchallenged in Geneva. In fact, the Genevan citizens had actually passed a decree, "for once and for ever, that neither in logic nor in any other branch of learning, shall any one among them go astray from the opinions of Aristotle".

Such iron mould of thought did in no wise suit Bruno's enquiring and ever-progressing genius, and he soon found that, as before in the monastery, evil looks were cast on him, and hard words were his lot. To his surprise at first, and then to his bitter indignation, he found that the Protestants of Geneva claimed the right to desert from Rome, and the right to persecute those who dissented from themselves, and at last, being told that the rulers

of the city had begun to recall the fate of Servetus, burned in that very city by Calvin, but some twenty-seven years before, Bruno deemed that he would do wisely to take to flight once more, lest the prison he had fled from in Italy should reappear to incarcerate him in Switzerland.

For the second time Giordano was a fugitive. For the second time, as night spread her precious darkness over the earth, Giordano stood beside an open window, watching for chance of escape. A friend had given him shelter whose house was on one of the city walls; and this night, when all was still, and the far-off tramp of the sentinel seemed only to mark the silence of the dusk, Giordano Bruno slipped down a rope from the window and safely reached the ground, and waving silent farewell to the faithful friend above, he turned his footsteps, outcast and fugitive once more, towards France, and slowly made his way to Lyons.

Of the stay of Giordano Bruno in Lyons we know nothing. At that time Lyons was a centre of printing, and from the presses of Lyons poured out books which spread over Europe, carrying light. Did Bruno long to see with his own eyes those printing presses which then seemed so wonderful? We cannot say. But we know that his stay in Lyons was very brief, and that he passed on to Toulouse. But in Toulouse was no safe resting-place for Bruno. Toulouse boasted itself the bulwark of the faith against the reforming tide, and soon threats resounded from every side against this heretic visitor, who, coming from the city of Calvin, was worse heretic than Calvin himself. Thirty-six years later a fellow-countryman of Bruno, Vanini, the Neapolitan, was burned for heresy in that same city of Toulouse, and Bruno was wise

in quitting it, and seeking rest in more liberal Paris. An exciting journey was that of our young Italian through France—"a long and vast tumult", he himself styled it. Papist and Huguenot were fighting against each other with equal religious ferocity, equal religious fanaticism. "The papists rased the churches of the Huguenots; the Huguenots pillaged the sacristies of the Papists; blood flowed in town and in country; fanaticism stifled family affection and civic friendship; the priests excommunicated with ringing bell and extinguished torch; the parsons anathematised pharisaism and idolatry."¹ Through this Babel of wavering creeds the heretic went on his way, noting how religion desolated a Christian land, and how Catholic and Protestant alike robbed and murdered to the glory of their Gods.

In 1582, Bruno saw stretching before him the long-dreamed-of city of Paris, Paris where he hoped to find an asylum, perhaps a welcome. There the Sorbonne stood as the type of unyielding bigotry, of protest against all new thought; face to face with it was the Royal College of France, welcoming the scientific spirit, welcoming the new light. Here, indeed, was a fair field for the knight-errant of Freethought, and here he put lance in rest to charge gallantly down on his old foe Aristotle, the idol of the Sorbonne. He asked permission to teach philosophy in public, and this being granted, the young Italian was soon surrounded by crowds of adoring pupils, attracted by "his ready wit and the Neapolitan warmth of his oratory". (*Ibid.*) Here was a teacher who made the driest study attractive, the hardest subject easy. The

¹ "Jord. Bruno." Par. C. Bartholmess. A book that you young folk should read when you are old enough to understand it.

King, Henry III., bade the young scholar attend his court. For the monk's cell he had the splendor of the palace; for weary cloistered hours the joy of intellectual combat, of vivid Parisian life.

"Giordano," said Henry brightly to him one day, entering his favorite's room; "Giordano, mon ami, I have good news for you. In the University a chair of Philosophy is vacant, and they tell me none can fill it better than a certain eloquent Italian, one Bruno, who has taken taken the town by storm."

Bruno, who had risen to his feet as the king entered, flushed over brow and cheek. "A chair, sire!" he faltered. "A chair for me in the University of Paris! I have dreamed of this at some future day, but I am yet too young, too unknown ——"

"Tut, tut!" interrupted the king. "Who better than you can draw the youth of Paris, or better control the same turbulent youth? No easy task it hath been found, I warrant you. No hesitation, Giordano mio; I will that a countryman of my mother shall fill a chair that he can fill so worthily."

"Sire, I can but accept," answered Bruno, gratefully. "I shall indeed have found rest and peace here, after my long wanderings. And when will my duties commence, my royal and generous friend?"

"Commence? Oh, at once," replied the king. "There are a few necessary formalities to be gone through, the signing of the papers, and so on. And, by the way, Giordano, you are careless of your religious duties. I do not remember me to have seen you at mass. Do not forget, my dear professor, that attendance at mass is one of the duties of your position."

Bruno started, and his bright eager face clouded, and became dark and set as flint.

"Did I understand your majesty rightly?" he said gravely; "as a professor I must attend mass?"

"Yes, surely," quoth the king, unnoticing the change of his companion's tone and face. "You would not have the professor set an example of irreligion to the university? Oh, it is not a long business, I assure you. You need not grudge such short loss of time, you busiest of men."

Bruno turned and walked to the window, a sore conflict raging in his heart. The professorship gave him an assured position, an adequate income. After all, what was a mass? A number of foolish words, of senseless phrases. He need only pretend belief in it all, and he would be safe, and might pursue his philosophical studies in peace. If he refused, not only would he lose the professorship, but the fickle and bigoted king might turn against him, and he might be driven from Paris, as from Italy and Switzerland, from Lyons and Toulouse. Only a mass? "Only a lie," muttered Bruno to himself between his teeth, and then his brow cleared and his eyes shone out again bright and true; he turned back to the king, who was gazing at him with surprise:

"Sire," he said gently, "you are goodness itself to an Italian exile; be not angry that I cannot accept the condition annexed to the gift you honor me with."

"The condition?" questioned the king. "What condition?"

"Sire, the attendance at mass."

"That is folly, Bruno. I have told you the service is brief, and however indifferent you may be to religious

duties, no good Catholic should object to attending mass."

"But sire," answered the young man, low and grave, "I am not a Catholic, and I cannot in honesty attend mass. Stay," he said pleadingly, as the king started back in horror; "I have not wilfully deceived you; my lectures have been on philosophy not on theology, and no question of my personal faith has arisen. Long ago I began to doubt; I became a monk in '72, but study made my faith waver"—

He stopped, for his pleading was unheard. Henry was pacing up and down the room, his face black as night. At last he stopped and faced the young Italian.

"Do I understand you rightly?" he said sternly. "Do I understand that you are not a Catholic? that you reject the authority of Holy Church, and are a heretic, a Lutheran, or a Calvinist, or perchance one of the accursed Huguenot fanatics?"

"I am not a Catholic," answered Bruno steadily, "nor do I follow Luther, or Calvin, or any of the Huguenot Protestants. I am a philosopher, a man of science, and my thought fits not into any creed I know."

There was silence for awhile; then the brave face and pleading eyes touched the king's heart, despite his religion, and he stretched out his hand to the young man bold enough to hold his own face-to-face with danger, and with royal wrath.

"Adieu!" he said gravely. "Be silent on your heresy, if you value your life. Holy Church has sharp arguments wherewith to convince the unbeliever, and there are seats more uncomfortable than that of a professorship burdened with a mass. I will pray our Blessed Lady to bring you

to a better frame of mind ; but if the doctors of the Sorbonne hear of your impious folly, even my favor may not avail to shield you."

And as the door closed, Giordano's head drooped, and a weary look clouded the brightness of his face. Was he again to be a fugitive, a wanderer? Was there no rest for the man who had outgrown the superstition of Christianity?

In 1583, Bruno turned his face northwards, and travelled to England, bearing letters from King Henry to Michel de Castelnau, French ambassador at the Court of Elizabeth, from whom he received friendly greeting and cordial hospitality. In the brilliant Court of Elizabeth, Bruno found congenial spirit in Sir Philip Sydney, the chivalrous and generous-hearted, and the Italian and the Englishman were soon closely knit in bonds of loyal friendship. Ever does Bruno speak tenderly and reverently of the rare mind and heart of his beloved friend. For Elizabeth herself, he conceived an intense admiration, and his praises of this Protestant Queen, worded with all the warmth and exaggeration of that time, were used against him with terrible effect, when the bloodhounds of the Inquisition pulled him down in later years. "No noble of her realm equals her in dignity, in heroism ; no lawyer is so learned ; no statesman is so wise She rises as a brilliant sun to shed light over the globe. By her title and her royal dignity, she is inferior to no monarch in the world. In the judgment, wisdom, and prudence she displays in governing, it is difficult to find a queen who approaches her." And this Elizabeth, so highly praised, was the excommunicated foe of Rome, the anathematised heretic who had rent England from the Papal obedience.

At that time England and Italy were as sisters, save in religion. Italian learning, Italian art, Italian literature—all found heartiest welcome under English skies. Shakspeare found in Italy much of his inspiration; later, Milton travelled thitherwards to seek poetic culture; the English court was as Italy to an Italian, and Bruno found himself surrounded there by memories of all he held most dear. Here might the knight-errant of liberty have found rest, had he been content to veil some of his boldest thoughts, and to pass merely as a Protestant, warring against the pretensions and the tyranny of Rome. But no such veiling was possible to Bruno, for soon came chance of bold speech—chance too tempting to be lost by the fiery Italian orator.

The fair city of the Isis was *en fête* in June, 1583; as silver Thames rolled past her dainty spires and tall battlements, he saw Oxford in her most gallant array, and heard the hum of many tongues. For the Earl of Leicester, Elizabeth's haughty favorite, held his court there as Chancellor of the University, and gave right royal welcome to the Count Albert de Lasco, having gathered there to do him honor England's most learned sons. Purple-robed doctors were there in long procession; splendid banquets were spread; and on each day a literary tournament was held, in which philosophical theses were maintained and attacked, in which tongues served as lances and syllogisms as battle-axes. At last, when Oxford challenged all comers to meet her sons in wordy warfare, Bruno's warrior-spirit flashed into fire, as when steel strikes flint. See him as he stands in the arena—beautiful, eager, eloquent, fighting anew the same old battle that he has fought in Italy, in Switzerland, in France. It is again the question of ques-

tions for the sixteenth century—Does the earth move? Are there more worlds than one? “The earth is motionless; the universe is finite and mobile,” said the University, with Aristotle and Ptolemy. “The earth revolves, and the universe is infinite,” said Bruno, leaning on Philolaus and Copernicus. Bruno has left his own account of the struggle. “The dispute grew envenomed; my antagonists took refuge in sarcasms and insults. One, seizing pen and paper, cried: ‘Look, be silent, and learn; I will teach you Ptolemy and Copernicus.’ But as soon as he began to sketch the spheres, it was clear that he had never opened Copernicus.”

And he on whose side was the Truth silenced his opponents, though he stood alone; and many a brow was bent darkly on the gallant Italian, as he strove for the honor of his mistress Science, and carried her colors victoriously through the fray.

Then Bruno prayed for and obtained permission to lecture at Oxford, and there, as at Paris, his lecture-room was crowded, though as he walked along the streets men turned and muttered “Atheist!” and priests, hearing that he taught that the Bible was not of authority in science, scowled bitterly at him as he passed, and sternly bade the young men leave alone the heretic and blasphemer, who would drag their souls to hell.

At last England became too hot to hold any longer the bold philosopher; his friends, Michel de Castelnau and Philip Sidney, had both been called abroad, and their strong protection was no longer around him. Threats grew louder; the storm-clouds hung heavier; and at last, early in 1586, Bruno fled from England to France once more, and held during three days in Paris at Whitsuntide

a public dispute, still on the physics of Aristotle. This dispute put an end to his residence in Paris. Henry no longer dared to defend him, and the Sorbonne muttered threats of punishment, and Bruno was once more forced to fly, and turned his steps to Marbourg in Hesse, hoping to find work and livelihood at the University there. At first, things looked brighter. In the July of the same year a doctor's degree was bestowed upon him, and strong, as he fancied, in this recognition, he begged permission to teach philosophy.

As he awaited this permission, regarded merely as a matter of form, Bruno's heart grew light. Here at length he might teach freely; here at length he might spread the truth he loved, and none would hinder him. As his messenger returned with a silk-tied scroll in his hand, Bruno took it gaily and carelessly, and cut the silken thread with a smile on his lips. But see how his face changes; see how his eyes darken; the Rector of the University writes dryly that he is obliged to deny the permission asked for; there are "grave reasons" why Bruno should not be allowed to teach, and so forth. The passionate Italian leapt to his feet in fiery wrath, and swiftly made his way to the Rector's house. Ushered into his presence, he flung the scroll on the table, and demanded to know what reasons were referred to. "Doctor of your University have you made me, and the doctor's right of teaching you deny me. Of what avail the empty title? Why do you treat me thus?"

The frigid thin-lipped Rector, Pierre Nigidius, drew his mouth into an acrid downward curve; "Your views, Dr. Bruno, are not sound. They are not such as are safe in a teacher of the young."

“Sound? safe?” cried Bruno impetuously. But if they are *true*?”

“Truth must be measured by the Divine standard, my dear sir, and your teaching that the earth revolves flies in the face of Scripture.”

“So much the worse for Scripture,” answered the hasty Italian, careless of the Rector’s darkening face.

“You blasphemer!” he answered sharply. “But no blasphemer shall teach in this city while I, Pierre Nigidius, have rule within its walls.”

“Take back then your trumpety degree!” cried Bruno, in his wrath, “for teacher who may not teach I will never be. Erase my name from the lists of your University, and do not mock me with an honor as senseless as your own creed.”

“There is no difficulty in erasing your name,” sneered Nigidius, “from a list that ought never to have been dishonored by it. Erased it shall be ere the sun go down, as it is erased from the Lamb’s book of life, and look to yourself, blaspheming infidel, lest you learn that Marbourg has prison for the heretic, be he foreigner or citizen of the State.”

So Bruno became once again a wanderer, and took refuge in Würtembourg.

There for two years Bruno found rest in the bosom of the University, in Würtembourg where there prevailed “liberty of speech and love of literature”. “Würtembourg,” he said, “is the Athens of Germany. Minerva the virgin is its mother!” And he left behind him his grateful words of thanks to this noble asylum of learning and of liberty, words that each should remember who may now tread the sacred streets of that German town:

“You did not question me as to my faith, which you

did not approve; you regarded only my love for charity and peace, for philanthropy and philosophy; you allowed me to be only the friend of wisdom, the lover of the muses; you did not forbid me to proclaim freely opinions contrary to the doctrines received among you Although philosophy is among you neither end nor means; although your piety, sober, pure, primitive, makes you prefer ancient physics and the mathematics of the past, yet you allow me to profess a new system You did not grow angry; you shewed wisdom, humanity and urbanity, with the sincere wish to help and to serve Far from restraining liberty of thought and from tarnishing your reputation for hospitality, you treated the traveller, the foreigner, the proscribed, as friend and fellow-citizen; you allowed him to protect himself against poverty by teaching; you repelled all the calumnies circulated about him during the two years that he spent within your walls, beneath the shade of your hospitality."

There is nothing to show why Bruno quitted this peaceful retreat, where he was safe, honored, and beloved. Perhaps his fiery warrior spirit could not rest happily where no combats were raging, and he yearned once more for the turmoil of hot theological controversy. Be that as it may, he left Würtemberg in 1688, and went to Prague, where the Emperor Rudolph II. was holding his Court. To the Emperor Bruno presented some mathematical theses, having learned that Rudolph was a friend to learning, but Bruno's heresy tainted his mathematics, and the Christian ruler turned a cold face on the heretic thinker. So he travelled to Helmstadt, where he became tutor to the eldest son of the reigning Duke of Brunswick for a few brief months, and then, the Duke dying, persecution struck

at him once more. Boethius, the head of the clergy, excommunicated him in open church, and all men thenceforth regarded him as outcast. For one year of struggle he held his ground, and then finding life was being made impossible to him, he passed out once more among strangers, teaching ever the doctrines that he loved.

And now Frankfort knew him for a few brief months, from June, 1690, to February, 1691, and here he published his last works, while his home life was cared for by a family named Wechel, a member of which had been a friend of Sir Philip Sydney. In Frankfort came to him a letter which drew him back to Italy, drew him into the jaws of that Inquisition from which he had fled, and which had had its sleuth-hounds on his trail ever since. See him as he bends over the letter, his cheeks flushing with the thought of Italy. The scroll was signed "*Giovanni Mocenigo*;" it prayed him come to Venice as tutor, assuring him of full safety and of cordial welcome. The young noble who wrote was of a house strong enough to protect, and he pledged his faith that secure home on Italian soil awaited the brilliant teacher, whose name for the last ten years had been ringing through Europe.

The letter dropped from Bruno's hands, as he rose slowly to his feet, and turned to the window which opened towards the south.

"*Italia! Italia?*" he sighed, his own soft Neapolitan tongue falling from his lips in cadences most musical. "*My beautiful, my beloved; shall I indeed see you once more? Oh, to feel the air of Italy, after the heavy air of the north! Oh, to see the skies of Italy, after these dull greys that are never blue!*"

His eyes sparkled, his pulses throbbed—but suddenly

his head drooped, and a weary sadness settled on his face.

"The Inquisition! What noble house can guard me from the cruel claws of the Roman wolf? Italy, which cradled me, will be my grave, I fear me, if I listen to the pleadings of this youth, and dwell in Venice. Here, at least, I am safe; and if one town grows too hot for me, another is open to me. But there! O Italy! thy palaces cover thy dungeons, and thy beauty is the mask over the face of the familiar."

The struggle of uncertainty was long; but at last the yearning for Italy, the home-sickness, triumphed, and Giordano Bruno set his face Italianwards. He travelled through Switzerland, paying a brief visit to Zurich, and then, crossing the Alps, saw stretching below him, in their autumnal glory, the sunny plains of the Italy he had loved and left. He turned his steps first to Padua, unable to resist the temptation of raising his voice for science in that famous town, whose University had on its roll the most illustrious names of Italy. His audacity struck his friends with terror: "It is said that the Nolain (Bruno)," wrote Acidalino from Bologna to Forgacz, Baron de Gimes, then in Padua, "is living and teaching among you. Is it so? What can that man be doing in Italy, whence he was forced to flee? I am astonished, stupified, and cannot believe the rumor true, well authenticated as it is."

A storm soon gathered round the intrepid heretic, and Bruno fled to Venice; and in March, 1692, we find him established in the palace of Giovanni Mocenigo. Here for about two months he dwelt in safety, pouring out to his pupil the treasures of learning he had acquired. Often and often, as they passed silently in their gondola along

the narrow water-ways, they conversed freely on the controverted questions of the day, on the Copernican theory, on the authority of Rome in matters of science. Often as the stars shone down from the cloudless sky, Bruno gazing at them would dazzle his companion with his dreams of other inhabited worlds and of the manifold life in endless forms distributed over the endless Universe. Little did he guess that those views of his, spoken freely in friendly converse, were repeated day after day by his pupil's lips into the ear of a dark-browed confessor, who later, in a parlor of the Inquisition, met his fellow-priests, and took counsel with them how Bruno might be betrayed unto them that they might put him to death.

The September moon shone broadly over Venice, and Bruno stood leaning lazily against one of the columns which stood at the foot of the broad white steps of the Mocenigo Palazzo, its base washed by the waters of the blue Adriatic Sea. In the glorious prime of his manhood, in the gracious beauty of his strength and vigor, he leaned there, gazing with those deep eyes of his at the ripples as they danced in the moonlight, at the brilliant full-faced moon hanging in the shimmering air. "How good life is; how beautiful Nature is;" he mused, with a smile on his lips. "Yet fools talk of hell-fire, and curse their brothers, under this serene expanse, amid this infinitude of worlds."

The moon-rays floated across the water, until the side of the canal which skirted the Mocenigo Palazzo lay in darkest shadow. None could see a gondola that slid swiftly and silently on till it lay at rest in the dimness beside the steps on which Bruno lounged in his careless restful ease.

"How beautiful life is without the Gods," he murmured. "Mighty universal mother! calm, serene, changing amid

changelessness; marvellous in beauty; glorious in majesty; would they have me blaspheme thee that I might worship their puny fancies? O Eternal Beauty!" and he sprang to his feet, stretching out his arms to the infinite expanse: "O boundless space! How could I live without thy fetterless freedom? how could I exist without thy radiant". . . .

The melodious voice rang out in its joy into the sweet evening air, and as its music rose a grating sound was heard. See! that shadowed gondola is at the steps; masked figures spring out and stain the moonlight with their darkness; a black cloak is flung over the sunny head and stifles the harmony of the glorious tones into a gasp that is like a death-rattle; the eyes have looked their last on the freedom of the dancing wavelets; never again shall those arms stretch out fetterless towards the boundless blue. Giordano Bruno is in the grip of the Inquisition, and never again, O noble soldier of Liberty, shall thine eyes range in freedom over the glory that has sunned thee from thy birth, and has become incarnate in the radiance of thy shadowless joy in life.

* * * * * *

It is dark, drear, and damp in that low chamber where Bruno lies, a grim circle round him. He is naked, and he lies on a frame, his ancles and his wrists bound tightly, and the sunny head thrown back; dauntless are brow and lip; fearless the bright brave eyes; and see that figure, crouching in the shadow; it is Judas; it is Giovanni Mocenigo, who has betrayed him to his doom.

"Come forth, Giovanni!" croaked a voice through the darkness. "Reveal the blasphemy thou hast confessed."

Judas was dragged within the range of those star-bright

eyes, and shrank and cowered under their light ; his lips muttered, but could not speak.

“Nay, let the lad go!” rang out the sweet full tones in their ancient music, shaming the harsh echoes of the cell. “Let the lad go ; poor boy ! he knows not what he has done. I make his confession for him. I have lifted one corner of the veil that hides the mighty mother from her children. What need to torture a child when you are set to murder a man ?”

“Blasphemer ! heretic ! the rack shall teach thee faith”, foamed the masked inquisitor beside him, and at a sign the wheels turned, and the pulleys creaked, and under the fearful strain the sweat of agony streamed from the naked body, and brow and lips were writhen with intolerable pain.

“Now, heretic, recant ! Now pray for mercy to the God thou hast blasphemed, to the Church thou hast abandoned. Apostate monk, confess thy master ! Recant thy heresies, and even now mercy is thine.”

“Truth that I have worshipped, keep me true,” fell from the white lips, gasping in their pain. And the bright head fell back, and merciful nature drew the veil of a swoon over the awful agony.

The Christians lifted the strained body from the rack, and cast it, senseless, into a dungeon far beneath the level of the waves that lapped against the castle walls. And, O children, for six years Giordano Bruno lay, for truth’s sake, in that cell ! No sunlight ever touched him ; no friend’s voice ever reached his ear ; no smile ever met his aching eyes ; no book cheered his loneliness ; no pen was granted to his numbed and weary hand. He was buried living in the tomb. Such mercy gave the Christian to the man who dared to think.

* * * * *

Eight years have passed, six in the tomb at Venice, and two since in Rome. The last two have been passed in controversy, and something of the old delight in strife has awakened in the long-stifled breast. But is this Bruno? The sunny hair has bleached in the darkness of the Venice dungeon; the bright eyes are bleared when the unused sunlight touches them; the strong limbs are bent and weak as those of an old man. The Christians have starved and tortured his life out of him. The heretic is old in the prime of his manhood.

But now the eight years' martyrdom is nearly over. For the last time he stands before his judges. He is excommunicated as Atheist; he is declared contumacious and irreconcilable; he is handed over to the civil officers, to be punished "without shedding of blood"—grim formula of hypocrisy that doomed the heretic to the awful agony of the stake.

Then sprang Bruno to his feet; they had forced him to his knees to listen to his sentence. Once more rang out clear the voice whose music had been harshened in the dungeon: "I think that you pronounce that sentence with more fear than I feel in hearing it". And head erect, and face well-nigh joyful, he walked steadily from the hall.

"Eight days' grace was yet given him in which to recant and deny the truth he believed; but Bruno had not taught all through Europe, and borne eight long years of dungeon pain, to turn recreant now to his mistress Truth. The 17th of February dawns, and the day of his death is here. To the Campi dei Fiori they take him, through a howling, fanatic crowd, composed in great part of pilgrims; they have clad him in the sulphur-colored garb of heresy,

hideous with pictured devils and flames and crosses, but the dress cannot mar his dignity as he walks calmly on, his eyes bright, his forehead serene, his step firm and steady; a priest pushes forward and presses on him a crucifix, but Bruno turns away his head and will not touch it; they bind him to the stake, and no word opens his lips; the flames rise around him, but no cry escapes him; to the end he is as serene as though he felt no agony, and the last glimpse the crowd catches of his face, ere the flames sear it, shows it calmly proud as ever; and now the smoke and the fire surround him, and Giordano Bruno is gone for evermore."

Gone? Ah! not so! Bruno lives while men can honor courage, and love can reverence the grave of a noble heart. He died, but from his stake rings out the message he left, which may fitly form his epitaph:

"TO KNOW HOW TO DIE IN ONE CENTURY, IS TO LIVE FOR ALL CENTURIES TO COME."



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