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RECORDS OF WOMAN.—NO. V.

*The Switzer's Wife.**

Nor look nor tone revealeth aught
Save woman's quietness of thought;
And yet around her is a light
Of inward majesty and might. *Arria, by M. J. J.*

It was the time when children bound to meet
Their father's homeward step from field or hill,
And when the herd's returning bells are sweet
In the Swiss valleys, and the Lakes grow still,
And the last note of that wild horn swells by,
Which haunts the Exile's heart with melody.
And lovely smiled full many an Alpine home,
Touch'd with the crimson of the dying hour,
Which lit its low roof by the torrent's foam,
And pierced its lattice through the vine-hung bower;
But one, the loveliest o'er the land that rose,
Then first look'd mournful in its green repose.
For Werner sat beneath the linden-tree,
That sent its lulling whispers through his door,
Ev'n as man sits whose heart alone would be
With some deep care, and thus can find no more
The accustom'd joy in all which Evening brings,
Gathering a household with her quiet wings.
His wife stood hush'd before him—sad, yet mild
In her beseeching mien;—he mark'd it not—
The silvery laughter of his bright-hair'd child
Rang from the greensward round the shelter'd spot,
But seem'd unheard;—until at last the boy
Raised from his heap'd up flowers a glance of joy,
And met his father's face:—but then a change
Pass'd swiftly o'er the brow of infant glee,
And a quick sense of something dimly strange
Brought him from play to stand beside the knee
So often climb'd, and lift his loving eyes
That shone through clouds of sorrowful surprise.
Then the proud bosom of the strong man shook;
—But tenderly his babe's fair mother laid
Her hand on his, and with a pleading look
Through tears half quivering,—o'er him bent, and said,
“What grief, dear friend, hath made thy heart its prey †
That thou shouldst turn thee from our love away?
“It is too sad to see thee thus, my friend!
Mark'st thou the wonder on thy boy's fair brow
Missing the smile from thine?—Oh cheer thee! bend
To his soft arms, unseal thy thoughts e'en now!

* Werner Stauffacher, one of the three confederates of the field of Grütli, had been alarmed by the envy with which the Austrian bailiff, Landenberg, had noticed the appearance of wealth and comfort which distinguished his dwelling. It was not, however, until roused by the entreaties of his wife, a woman who seems to have been of an heroic spirit, that he was induced to deliberate with his friends upon the measures by which Switzerland was finally delivered.

† See the beautiful scene between Stauffacher and his wife in Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*—“So ernst, mein freund? Ich kenne dich nicht mehr,” &c.

Thou dost not kindly to withhold the share
Of tried affection in thy secret care."

He look'd up into that sweet earnest face,
But sternly, mournfully : not yet the band
Was loosen'd from his soul ; its inmost place
Not yet unveil'd by Love's o'ermastering hand.
"Speak low !" he cried, and pointed where on high
The white Alps glitter'd through the solemn sky :

" We must speak low amidst our ancient hills
And their free torrents ; for the days are come
When Tyranny lies couch'd by forest-rills,
And meets the shepherd in his mountain-home.
Go, pour the wine of our own grapes in fear,
Keep silence by the hearth !—its foes are near.

" The envy of th' oppressor's eye hath been
Upon my heritage : I sit to-night
Under my household-tree !—if not serene,
Yet with the faces best-belov'd in sight ;
To-morrow eve may find me chain'd, and thee—
—How can I bear the boy's young smiles to see ?"

The bright blood left that youthful mother's cheek—
Back on the linden-stem she lean'd her form,
And her lip trembled, as it strove to speak,
Like a wild harp-string shaken by the storm.
—'Twas but a moment, and the faintness pass'd,
And the free Alpine spirit woke at last.

And she, that ever through her home had moved
With the meek thoughtfulness and quiet smile
Of woman, calmly loving and beloved,
And timid in her happiness the while,
Stood brightly forth, and steadfastly, that hour,
Her clear glance kindling into sudden power.

Ay, pale she stood, but with an eye of light,
And took her fair child to her holy breast,
And lifted her soft voice, that gather'd might
As it found language :—" Are we thus oppress'd ?
Then must we rise upon our mountain sod,
And man must arm, and woman call on God !

" I know what thou wouldst do ;—and be it done !
Thy soul is darken'd with its fears for me—
Trust me to Heaven, my husband !—this, thy son,
The babe whom I have borne thee, must be free !
And the sweet memory of our pleasant hearth
May well give strength—if aught be strong on earth.

" Thou hast been brooding o'er the silent dread
Of my desponding tears ;—now lift once more,
My Hunter of the Hills, thy stately head,
And let thine eagle-glance my joy restore !
I can bear all, but seeing thee subdued :—
Take to thee back thine own undaunted mood !

" Go forth beside the waters, and along
The chamois-paths, and through the forests go !
And tell, in burning words, thy tale of wrong
To the brave hearts that midst the hamlets glow.
God shall be with thee, my beloved—away !
Bless out thy child, and leave me—I can pray."

He sprang up like a warrior-youth a waking
To clarion sounds upon the ringing air ;
He caught her to his breast, while proud tears, breaking
From his dark eyes, fell o'er her braided hair ;
And " Worthy art thou," was his joyous cry,
" That man for thee should gird himself to die !
" My bride, my wife, the mother of my child !
Now shall thy name be armour to my heart ;
And this our land, by chains no more defiled,
Be taught of thee to choose the better part !
I go—thy spirit on my words shall dwell,
Thy gentle voice shall stir the Alps—farewell !"
And thus they parted—by the quiet lake,
In the clear starlight : he, the strength to rouse
Of the deep hills ; she, thoughtful for his sake,
To rock her child beneath the whispering boughs,
Singing its blue, half-curtain'd eyes to sleep,
With a low hymn, amidst the stillness deep.

F. H.

THE EFFIGIES.

————— “ Women act their parts
When they do make their ordered houses know them.
Men must be busy out of doors, must stir
The city ;—yea, make the great world aware
That they are in it ; for the mastery
Of which they race and wrestle.”—KNOWLES.

WARRIOR! whose image on thy tomb,
With shield and crested head,
Sleeps proudly in the purple gloom
By the stain'd window shed ;
The records of thy name and race
Have faded from the stone,
Yet through a cloud of years I trace
What thou hast been and done.

A banner from its flashing spear
Flung out o'er many a fight ;
A war-cry ringing far and clear,
And strong to turn the flight ;
An arm that bravely bore the lance
On for the holy shrine,
A haughty heart and a kingly glance—
—Chief! were not these things thine?

A lofty place where leaders sate
Around the council-board ;
In festive halls a chair of state,
When the blood-red wine was pour'd ;
A name that drew a prouder tone
From herald, harp, and bard ;—
—Surely these things were all thine own,
So hadst thou thy reward !

Woman ! whose sculptured form at rest
—By the armed knight is laid,
With meek hands folded o'er a breast
In matron-ropes array'd ;
What was *thy* tale?—Oh, gentle mate
Of him, the bold and free,
Bound unto his victorious fate,
What bard hath sung of *thee* ?

He woo'd a bright and burning star ;
Thine was the void, the gloom,
The straining eye that follow'd far
His oft receding plume ;
The heart-sick listening while his steed
Sent echoes on the breeze ;
The pang—but when did Fame take heed
Of griefs obscure as these ?

Thy silent and secluded hours,
Through many a lonely day,
While bending o'er thy broider'd flowers,
With spirit far away ;
Thy weeping midnight prayers for him
Who fought on Syrian plains ;
Thy watchings till the torch grew dim,—
—*These* fill no minstrel-strains.

A still, sad life was thine!—long years,
With tasks unguerdon'd fraught,
Deep, quiet Love, submissive tears,
Vigils of anxious thought ;
Prayers at the Cross in fervour pour'd ;
Alms to the Pilgrim given ;—
—Oh ! happy, happier than thy Lord
In that lone path to Heaven !

F. H.

CHIVALRIC SKETCHES.—NO. I.

*The Vigil of Arms.**

A SOUNDING step was heard by night,
In a church where the mighty slept,
As a mail-clad youth, till morning's light,
'Midst the tombs his vigil kept.
He walk'd in dreams of Power and Fame,
He lifted a proud bright eye,
For the hours were few that withheld his name
From the roll of Chivalry.

Down the moon-lit aisles he paced alone,
With a free and stately tread,
And the floor gave back a muffled tone
From the couches of the Dead :
The silent many that round him lay,
The crown'd and helm'd that were,
The haughty chiefs of the war-array—
—Each in his sepulchre!

But no dim warning of Time or Fate
That youth's flush'd hope could chill,
He moved through the trophies of buried state
With each proud pulse throbbing still.
He heard, as the wind through the chancel sung,
A swell of the trumpet's breath,
He look'd to the banners, on high that hung,
And not to the dust beneath.

And a royal masque of splendour seem'd
Before him to unfold,
Through the solemn arches on it stream'd,
With many a gleam of gold ;
There were crested Knight and gorgeous Dame,
Glittering athwart the gloom,
And he follow'd till his bold step came
To his Warrior-Father's tomb.

But there the still and shadowy might
Of the monumental stone,
And the holy sleep of the soft lamp's light,
That over its quiet shone,
And the image of that Sire who died
In his noon-day of renown—
—*These* had a power unto which the pride
Of fiery life bow'd down.

And a spirit from his early years
Came back o'er his thoughts to move,
Till his eye was fill'd with memory's tears,
And his heart with childhood's love!
And he look'd, with a change in his softening glance,
To the armour o'er the grave,
For there they hung, the shield and lance,
And the gauntlet of the brave.

* The candidate for knighthood was under the necessity of keeping watch, the night before his inauguration, in a church, and completely armed. This was called the Vigil of Arms.

And the sword of many a field was there,
 With its Cross for the hour of need,*
 When the Knight's bold war-cry hath sunk in prayer,
 And the spear is a broken reed!
 —Hush! did a breeze through the armour sigh?
 Did the folds of the banner shake?
 Not so!—from the tomb's dark mystery
 There seem'd a voice to break!
 He had heard that voice bid clarions blow,
 He had caught its last blessing's breath—
 'Twas the same! but its awful sweetness now
 Had an under tone of Death!
 And it said—"The sword hath conquer'd kings,
 And the spear through realms hath pass'd,
 But the Cross alone, of all these things,
 Might avail me at the last!"

F. H.

* "The Knight swore by his sword, for its cross-hilt was emblematical of his Saviour's cross. The sword was his only crucifix when mass was said in the pause between the forming of the military array and the laying of lances in their rests. It was moreover his consolation in the hour of death."—See *Mills's History of Chivalry*.

THE BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

BIRDS, joyous Birds of the wandering wing!
Whence is it ye come with the flowers of Spring?
—“ We come from the shores of the green old Nile,
From the land where the roses of Sharon smile,
From the palms that wave through the Indian sky,
From the myrrh-trees of glowing Araby.

“ We have swept o'er cities, in song renown'd—
Silent they lie, with the deserts round!
We have cross'd proud rivers, whose tide hath roll'd
All dark with the warrior-blood of old;
And each worn wing hath regain'd its home,
Under Peasant's roof-tree, or Monarch's dome.”

And what have ye found in the Monarch's dome,
Since last ye traversed the blue sea's foam.”

—“ We have found a change, we have found a pall,
And a gloom o'ershadowing the banquet's hall,
And a mark on the floor, as of life-drops spilt—
—Nought looks the same, save the nest we built!”

Oh, joyous Birds, it hath still been so!
Through the halls of Kings doth the tempest go!
But the huts of the hamlet lie still and deep,
And the hills o'er their quiet a vigil keep.
Say, what have ye found in the Peasant's cot,
Since last ye parted from that sweet spot?

“ A change we have found there, and many a change!
Faces and footsteps and all things strange!
Gone are the heads of the silvery hair,
And the young that were, have a brow of care,
And the place is hush'd where the children play'd—
—Nought looks the same, save the nest we made!”

Sad is your tale of the beautiful earth,
Birds that o'ersweep it in power and mirth!
Yet, through the wastes of the trackless air,
Ye have a guide, and shall *we* despair?
Ye over desert and deep have pass'd—
—So shall *we* reach our bright home at last!— F. H.

RECORDS OF WOMAN.—NO. VI.

The American Forest-Girl.

WILDLY and mournfully the Indian drum
On the deep hush of moonlight forests broke :—
“ Sing us a death-song, for thine hour is come.”
So the red Warriors to their Captive spoke.
Still, and amidst those dusky forms alone,
A youth, a fair-hair'd youth, of England stood,
Like a king's son ; though from his cheek had flown
The mantling crimson of the island-blood,
And his press'd lips look'd marble. Fiercely bright,
And high around him, blaz'd the fires of night ;
Rocking beneath the cedars to and fro
As the wind pass'd, and with a fitful glow
Lighting the victim's face :—but who could tell
Of what within his secret heart befel,
Known but to Heaven that hour?—Perchance a thought
Of his far home, then so intensely wrought
That its full image, pictured to his eye
On the dark ground of mortal agony,
Rose clear as day!—And he might see the band
Of his young sisters wandering hand in hand
Where the laburnums droop'd ; or happy binding
The jasmine, up the door's low pillars winding ;
Or, as day faded on their gentle mirth,
Gathering, with braided hair, around the hearth

Where sat their mother ;—and that mother's face
 Its grave sweet smile yet wearing in the place
 Where so it ever smiled!—Perchance the prayer
 Learn'd at her knee came back on his despair;
 The blessing from her voice, the very tone
 Of her " *Good-night*" might breathe from boyhood gone!
 —He started and look'd up:—thick cypress boughs,
 Full of strange sound, waved o'er him, darkly red
 In the broad stormy firelight; savage brows,
 With tall plumes crested and wild hues o'erspread,
 Girt him like feverish phantoms; and pale stars
 Look'd through the branches as through dungeon-bars,
 Shedding no hope!—He knew, he felt his doom.—
 Oh! what a tale to shadow with its gloom
 That happy hall in England!—Idle fear!
 Would the winds tell it?—who might dream or hear
 The secret of the forests? To the stake
 They bound him; and that proud young Soldier strove
 His father's spirit in his breast to wake,
 Trusting to die in silence!—He, the love
 Of many hearts!—the fondly-rear'd—the fair,
 Gladdening all eyes to see!—And fetter'd there
 He stood beside his death-pyre, and the brand
 Flamed up to light it, in the chieftain's hand!
 —He thought upon his God. Hush! hark!—a cry
 Breaks on the stern and dread solemnity!
 A step hath pierced the ring! Who dares intrude
 On the dark Hunters in their vengeful mood?
 A Girl—a young slight Girl!—a fawn-like child
 Of green savannas and the leafy wild,
 Springing unmark'd till then, as some lone flower,
 Happy because the sunshine is its dower;
 Yet one that knew how early tears are shed,
 For *her's* had mourn'd a playmate brother dead.
 She had sat gazing on the victim long,
 Until the pity of her soul grew strong;
 And, by its passion's deepening fervour sway'd,
 Ev'n to the stake she rush'd, and gently laid
 His bright head on her bosom, and around
 His form her slender arms to shield it wound
 Like close Liannes; then raised her glittering eye,
 And clear-toned voice that said—" He shall not die!"
 —" He shall not die!"—the gloomy forest thrill'd
 To that sweet sound. A sudden wonder fell
 On the fierce throng; and heart and hand were still'd—
 Struck down, as by the whisper of a spell.
 They gazed—their dark souls bow'd before the maid,
 She of the dancing step in wood and glade!
 And as her cheek flush'd through its olive hue,
 As her black tresses to the night-wind flew,
 Something o'ermaster'd them from that young mien—
 Something of Heaven, in silence felt and seen;
 And seeming, to their child-like faith, a token
 That the Great Spirit by her voice had spoken.
 They loosed the bonds that held their Captive's breath;
 From his pale lips they took the cup of Death;
 They quench'd the brand beneath the cypress tree—
 " Away," they cried, " young Stranger! thou art free."

F. H.

RECORDS OF WOMAN.—NO. VII.

*Gertrude.**

The Baron Von der Wart, accused, though it is believed unjustly, as an accomplice in the assassination of the Emperor Albert, was bound alive on the wheel, and attended by his wife Gertrude, throughout his last agonizing moments, with the most heroic fidelity. Her own sufferings, and those of her unfortunate husband, are most affectingly described in a letter which she afterwards addressed to a female friend, and which was published some years ago at Haarlem, in a book entitled "Gertrude Von der Wart, or Fidelity unto death."

HER hands were clasp'd, her dark eyes raised,
The breeze threw back her hair ;
Up to the fearful wheel she gazed,
All that she loved was there.
The night was round her clear and cold,
The holy heaven above ;
Its pale stars watching to behold
The night of earthly love.

"And bid me not depart," she cried,
"My Rudolph ! say not so !
This is no time to quit thy side,
Peace, peace ! I cannot go.
Hath the world aught for me to fear
When death is on thy brow ?
The world !—what means it ?—*mine is here*—
I will not leave thee now !

"I have been with thee in thine hour
Of glory and of bliss,
Doubt not its memory's living power
To strengthen me through this !
And thou, mine honour'd love and true,
Bear on, bear nobly on !
We have the blessed Heaven in view,
Whose rest shall soon be won."—

And were not these high words to flow
From Woman's breaking heart ?
—Through all that night of bitterest woe
She bore her lofty part :
But oh ! with such a freezing eye,
With such a curdling cheek—
—Love, love ! of mortal agony,
Thou, only *thou*, shouldst speak !

The winds rose high—but with them rose
Her voice, that he might hear ;—
Perchance that dark hour brought repose
To happy bosoms near :
While she sat striving with despair
Beside his tortured form,
And pouring her deep soul in prayer
Forth on the rushing storm.

* The author was not aware, at the time this little poem was written, that the courage and affection of Gertrude Von der Wart had previously been celebrated by another writer in a yet unpublished poem.

She wiped the death-damps from his brow,
With her pale hands and soft,
Whose touch, upon the lute chords low,
Had still'd his heart so oft.
She spread her mantle o'er his breast,
She bathed his lips with dew,
And on his cheek such kisses press'd,
As Joy and Hope ne'er knew.
Oh! lovely are ye, Love and Faith,
Enduring to the last!
She had her meed—one smile in Death—
And his worn spirit pass'd.
While even as o'er a martyr's grave,
She knelt on that sad spot,
And weeping, bless'd the God who gave
Strength to forsake it not!

F. H.

THE SUNBEAM.

THOU art no lingerer in monarchs' hall ;
A joy thou art, and a wealth to all—
A bearer of hope unto land and sea ;
Sunbeam ! what gift has the world like thee ?

Thou art walking the billows, and Ocean smiles—
Thou hast touch'd with glory his thousand isles !
Thou hast lit up the ships and the feathery foam,
And gladden'd the sailor, like words from home.

To the solemn depths of the forest shades,
Thou art streaming on through their green arcades,
And the quivering leaves that have caught thy glow,
Like fire-flies glance to the pools below.

I look'd on the mountains—a vapour lay,
Folding their heights in its dark array ;
Thou brokest forth—and the mist became
A crown and a mantle of living flame.

I look'd on the peasant's lowly cot—
Something of sadness had wrapt the spot ;
But a gleam of *thee* on its casement fell,
And it laugh'd into beauty at that bright spell.

To the earth's wild places a guest thou art,
Flushing the waste like the rose's heart ;
And thou scornest not, from thy pomp, to shed
A tender light on the ruin's head.

Thou tak'st through the dim church-aisle thy way,
And its pillars from twilight flash forth to day,
And its high, pale tombs, with their trophies old,
Are bathed in a flood as of burning gold.

And thou turnest not from the humblest grave,
Where a flower to the sighing winds may wave ;
Thou scatter'st its gloom like the dreams of rest,
Thou sleepest in love on its grassy breast.

Sunbeam of summer ! oh ! what is like thee ?
Hope of the wilderness, joy of the sea !
—*One* thing is like thee, to mortals given,
The faith, touch ing all things with hues of Heaven.

F. H.

THE INVOCATION.

ANSWER me, burning Stars of night!
Where is the Spirit gone,
That, past the reach of human sight,
Even as a breeze hath flown?
—And the Stars answer'd me—“ We roll
In light and power on high,
But, of the never-dying soul,
Ask things that cannot die!”

O many-toned and chainless Wind!
Thou art a wanderer free;
Tell me if *thou* its place canst find,
Far over mount and sea?
—And the Wind murmur'd in reply—
“The blue deep I have cross'd,
And met its barks and billows high,
But not what thou hast lost.”

Ye Clouds that gorgeously repose
Around the setting sun,
Answer! have *ye* a home for those
Whose earthly race has run?
—The bright Clouds answer'd—“ We depart,
We vanish from the sky;
Ask what is deathless in thy heart,
For that which cannot die!”

Speak then, thou Voice of God within,
Thou of the deep low tone!
Answer me through life's restless din,
Where is the Spirit flown?
—And the Voice answer'd—“ Be thou still!
Enough to know is given;
Clouds, Winds, and Stars, *their* task fulfil,
Thine is to trust in Heaven!”

F. H.