

fine black of its silken lashes, or one of her rosy cheeks, were moved ever so little from its centre of gravity—if her lovely mouth ended abruptly with a straight line on one side, while on the other it lost itself in the most graceful curve—what would become of the form of the whole of her perfect face, although every part single retained its full beauty? Must not everything, then, that heightens and strengthens this expression of balance, enhance the beauty of person; and since the form of beauty in the invisible is no other than that in the visible, must not the latter be perfected, when increased by the reflection of the former? A gentle power dwells in both, and appears in the exterior, if no overweight, be it through weakness on one side or impetuosity of passion on the other, annihilates the equilibrium. Any indication of weakness in the withering of the limbs of a healthy body, as in the features of the face, impairs beauty, because it speaks the weakness of a human proclivity; and every violent passion has the same injurious effect, by marking the face with the want of power or the want of a counterbalance. For the febrile intensity of passion, far from being strength, can arise only from weakness, namely: from the weakness of a counterbalance, which alone could keep passion within the golden bounds of a harmonious desire. Hence, Reason alone is strong, for she alone can watch over the preservation of this balance, by supporting the weak side and subduing the strong one. Passion has the mobility and inconstancy of whim, while reason, preserving the balance of desires, gives firmness. Passion rises and subsides, reason is always the same."

Here Diotima paused, looking down in seeming abstraction.

"Do you not think, Socrates," she continued, after a while, "that the beautiful Achilles even was less lovely when, enraged at Agamemnon, he laid his hand upon his sword? But the divine Homer does not suffer his favorite to sink. The wise Athene seizes his arm, speaks words of moderation to him, and I see the whole splendor of his beauty return.

"But I must confine myself to my own sex, for with female beauty I ought to be most conversant. Does not the charm of love impart a grace, without which beauty is not beautiful—a grace with which the celestial Aphrodite is accompanied when she resolves to be sure of her conquest? Does it not invest with a

beauty which wholly originates within? And its most potent spell, does it not consist in the mild chasteness which balances sweet desire? Look there at the Medusa's head in the hand of the victorious Perseus, as delineated in yonder painting of Polygnotus. Is it not the most finished beauty? and yet you shrink from it. You behold the shocking serpent hair destroying a beauty which would meet you with the loveliest impression when accompanied by virtuous grace.

"Thus the beauty of the soul admixes with that of the person, and both are the offspring of one common *Model of Beauty*."

Here Diotima became silent and relapsed into her former ecstasy, which caused her to forget that I sat before her, motionless and in silence, for I was lost in meditation at the sublime truths which I had heard.

"Then," interrupted Theodata, "then, according to the opinion of your divine Diotima, mind and modesty, soul and virtue, were the surest and best cosmetics for us Grecian ladies. How can you—"

At this moment the door opened, and the rich Agathon rushed into the room. Socrates stole away silently, without being missed, and history gives us no further record of the fate of the beautiful Theodata.

THE PREACHER'S VASE OF FLOWERS.

By Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.

In the pulpit the preacher rises
With the flowers beside his hand.
Now those costly gathered blossoms
Are the worship of the land.

Like the Poets, they hand the legends
Of the golden summer down,
While their brothers of earth work onward
In the wintry chain and frown.

Lo! she is here beside thee,
The floweret of thine heart;
She is here whom most thou seekest
With thy compassionate art.

It is not yon haughty Lily,
That shows neither blight nor stain;
It is not yon Rose of scarlet,
Drenched with the passionate rain.

It is not the faithful Ivy,
That dreams of the ruin still;
Nor the little crumpled Violet,
Brought sightward against its will.

It is that bruised blossom,
With the deadly blight and stain
It is that once trampled blossom
That never shall rise again.

VENICE.

By Madame Octavia Le Vert.

"—throned on her hundred isles—
She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from Ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers."



LONG the coast of northeastern Italy, where the waves of the Adriatic gaily meet the waters of the Brenta, the Adige, and the Po, a long sand-bank tells of their union, forming a bulwark against the fierce storms which often sweep over this turbulent sea. It is called the Lido, and is pierced by six canals, through which vessels enter the port of Venice. These passways are strongly fortified, and obstructions placed within them can readily hinder the entrance of an enemy's ship.

Fifteen hundred years ago, between the Lido and the mainland, there were eighty small islands, formed by the *debris* brought down from the Alps by these three rivers. Here the terror-stricken Veneti, driven from their homes by the inroads of the Huns, led on by the fearful Attila, sought a refuge. Like the sea-bird driven from the land, they hid among the sedges and rushes of these islets, scarcely above the surface of the water.

It was the boast of old Rome that its people imbibed strength and vigor from the wolf's milk, which nourished its first founders. Hence, we may truly say, the Venetians derived their energy and indomitable industry from the unceasing necessity of action, of toil and struggle. A kind Providence seemed to have given them a genius and adaptativeness to their condition, unprecedented in the annals of the world. Resolved to build a great city, they drove piles into the deep marsh, for it could not be called ground. Within these circles they threw stones and great rocks, brought from the main land by infinite labor, and upon these they built great houses, after a firm foundation was obtained. The space between the islands they cleared away, suffering the waves of the Adriatic to flow freely through them, forming streets, like canals. Thus, the Gondola becomes as necessary to Venice as sunlight to the flowers, and quite as much a part and portion of its glory as are its splendid palaces, glittering domes, and lofty towers.

In a few centuries the Venetians had

triumphed over all the surroundings of hard fortune, and had become the great commercial power of the world. All the sunny isles of the Archipelago were theirs—the trade of India was theirs. The ships of Venice were on all the seas, and its merchants were styled “Princes.” To be a Venetian was to be free, independent, and rich; it was their boast, all the world over, as it is the boast of our free people, that we are Americans.

From the period of the city’s first creation by the fugitives, from the desolating power of Attila, the Hun, until its downfall before the victorious army of Napoleon Bonaparte, there were nearly fifteen hundred years. First there was poverty, terror, and constant combat with stern difficulties; next prosperity, triumph, and gorgeous splendor; then corruption, oppression, and treachery; and at last the surrender of all power into the hands of strangers and tyrants. In 1848, for a brief period, the old love of liberty blazed up, and the fire of true patriotism gave earnest of the brightest days of the past; but alas! the “Island of Sacrifice,” although each grain of its sands was steeped in the heart’s warm blood of loyal men, moved not the pity of European nations, and again Radetzky, with his fierce and cruel Austrians became its master.

From Attila to Bonaparte there is a long array of glorious names, which still light up the pages of history, and can never grow dim while the love for Shakspeare, for Byron, for Schiller, for Dante, and for Tasso, has a home and hold upon the human heart; they have perpetuated the noble deeds, and graven upon the soul the impassioned romance of its people:

“Ours is a trophy, which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock, and the Moor.
And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away—
The keystones of the arch! though all were o’er,
For us re-peopled were the solitary shore.”

☞ It was very well to buy the works of deceased painters, if we wished to place them in a public gallery, and our motive was unselfish; but, when possible, let us purchase them while their authors are still alive. To prevent the evil which now existed, he suggested that the works of deceased artists should be sold at public auction by the government; and that the excess realized beyond the sum which the painters had charged during their lifetime, should go toward reducing the general taxation of the country.—*Ruskin.*

THE WITCH’S DEED.

By Mrs. Metta V. Victor.

I.

WHAT evil thing obscured the moon?
A witch, deformed and black!
The wind was shrieking a hollow tune
With her upon his back.
Along the lonely road
A traveller passed slowly by;
He heeded not the muttering sky,
But only the horse which he bestrode,
That would not keep the narrow track.

II.

He thought the witch was a ragged cloud;
He had heard the wind before;
His heart was warm, his heart was proud
And warm to its inmost core.
For he was riding, that lonely night,
The maiden to see,
Who, the next morning, robéd white,
His bride would be.

III.

The witch’s garments flutter far
Before the face of every star;
And fast and fast she drives the wind,
While troupes of spirits trail behind.

IV.

The girl from her casement looketh out—
The bats are flitting the turrets about;
She looketh, longing, into the night;
Her cheek is red, her eye is bright.
“O, would the cloud were gone,” she sighed,
“I cannot see him riding fast;
O, would the wind were still,” she cried,
“I cannot hear him for the blast.”

V.

She heard her maidens murmuring low—
She turned her head and laughéd sweet;
Their merry glance she could not meet,
Her eyes betrayed her fond thought so.
The golden lamps were swinging high
In the bride’s perfuméd room;
But not a golden star in the sky
Shone on the brave bridegroom.

VI.

“Why leanest out so long and late?
Thou wilt be pale to-morrow morn;
Thou can’st not see beyond the gate!”
She laughéd with gay scorn:
“’Tis true, the night is dim;
I see not him,
But he doth gaze on me afar;
My casement glimmers like a star;
My eyes shall light my own brave knight
Upon his dreary way,” she said.

VII.

Her lovely head
She leaned against the casement stone;
Her waving hair around her shone;
The smiles about her mouth lay still—
She looketh out into the dark;
At every sound her heart doth thrill—
“Hark! hark!”
She whispers to her frolic band,
Who listen, straight, but nothing hear;
She kisses the ring on her small left hand
When none of them are near.

VIII.

“We are sleepy,” they said;
“We would not have the bridegroom late
Who six long hours should make us wait!
Come sweet, to bed;
We are vexed to think of the care
With which we thridded thy flowing hair
With jewels, and bathed thy fragrant brow
For the kiss it should have had ere now;
And girdled thy waist with pearls less white,
And tied thy tiny shoes so tight,
And placed the gem most costly bright
Upon thy breast, whose fluttering snow
Doth keep it sparkling so.
It is a shame he doth not see
How thought of him becometh thee!
Shall we our work of love undo?”
“No, no!” she cried, “he’s coming soon!”
The witch’s hand held fast the moon
That could not struggle through.

IX.

The wind it waves the bride’s long hair;
The witch she clutches it, riding there;
She tosses it up in fierce disdain
To see it glitter with gems in vain.
The girl grows pale—
Her heart doth fail;
She knows not why, but the wind seems chill—
It goes to her heart with an icy thrill.

X.

The watch-dog howled with sudden dread.
“Oh, would my lover were here!” she said.
The witch upon the wind drew near—
She bent close down to the maiden’s ear,
What she said, none ever knew—
The bridemaids thought the wind but blew;
But the bride turned a stony face
And dropped down quiet in her place.

XI.

They heard the clatter of horse’s feet,
That to the gate came fast;
They cried, “Arouse thee, lady sweet,
Thy lover cometh at last!”
Long and long she lay in a swoon;
Why did they call her back?
The witch’s hand held fast the moon,
The horse had stumbled on the track;
With eye of flame,
Riderless and fierce he came,
Shaking with a desperate fright;
While the witch laughed out on the night.