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This is true Liberty, when Free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

[EDITOR

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Literature.

HOME AND FRIENDS.

BY CHARLES SWAIN.

Oh! there's a power to make each hour
As sweet as heaven designed it;
Nor need we roam to bring it home,
Though few there be that find it.
We seek too high for things close by,
And lose what nature found us;
For life hath here no charm so dear
As home and friends around us.

We oft destroy the present joy
For future hopes—and praise them;
Whilst flowers as sweet bloom at our feet,
If we'd but stoop to raise them;
For things afar still sweeter are
When youth's bright spell hath bound us;
But soon we're taught the earth has nought
Like home and friends around us.

The friends that speed in time of need,
When hope's fast rood is shaken,
Will show us still that come what will,
We are not quite forsaken.
Though all were night, but the light
From friendship's altar crown'd us,
'Twould prove the bliss of earth was this—
Our home and friends around us.

THE QUADROON GIRL.

The tropical heat of noontide was over, but the air was still sultry and oppressive. A slight breeze had indeed sprung up, but too languid to raise the heads of the drooping flowers, it only whispered to them, perchance in praise of their luxurious grace, and then died again into stillness.

There was but one moving figure to be seen, and it ill accorded with the desolate character of the landscape, for Lucille, the Quadroon girl, was very beautiful, and, clad in the brilliant hues which so well became her, seemed to tread the lonely path by the light of her own loveliness.

It was indeed a dreary scene, for she was approaching one of those extinct volcanoes with which the island of Martinique abounds, and the rugged ground was seared and darkened by the hot breath which had passed over it. Here and there the masses of gray stone were clothed with the exuberant vegetation of that glowing climate, but for the most part all was bare and black, as though some ancient curse rested upon the spot, and chilled the generous hand of nature.

Lucille seemed little to heed the scene; her large eyes, dark as night, were sadly gazing eastward, and her small head set so proudly on the column like throat, was bent dejectedly. Occasionally she raised it to reconnoitre, and at last a gleam of pleasure and recognition shot across her face. A stranger would never have dreamed of human habitation in that wild spot, but Lucille's eyes sought out a dark hollow in the rock, and already distinguished within it the stooping form of an aged woman. As she approached, her step quickened, and at last, seemingly in unconquerable impatience, she darted forward into the cavern.

"What, Lucille! and hast thou come at last?" said the old woman, and will nothing but sorrow over bring thee to my side? Nay, deny it not, there are tears in thy heart, hanging like thunder rain in the heavens; and see, the first touch of my hand has brought the torrent down!"

It was true, Lucille had flung herself to the ground in an agony of tears, the violence of her sobs shaking down her hair into a wilderness of darkness round her polished shoulders. Very soon, however, like the storm-drops to which the old crone had compared them, the large tears ceased to flow, and she looked up.

"Mother you are right," she said; "whether by the power of that dark art which all ascribe to you, or whether by the love you bear me, I know not—but you read clearly as ever the secret of my heart, and I dare not, if I would deny it."
"Gabriel has deserted thee."

"It is so, mother, but oh! tell me, tell me at least that my heart is still my own—that he has striven to free it, but cannot?"

"Lucille, canst thou bear it? I can tell thee somewhat."

"Oh! mother, there is nothing I could not bear if he but loves me still—did I not tell you long since, when first I bent over him in that wild fever, that I could die content, nay, that I could live, and see his face no more, if but once I heard him say that he loved me?"

"And thou hadst that wish."

"Yes! dear mother, you foretold that I should live to hear those precious words, and I did."

"No great wisdom was needed for that prophecy, child, rejoined the other, with a fondness of tone that came strangely from her thin withered lips. "Even now, I marvel as I see thee, that he could ever gaze enough on those eyes of thine."

"Hush! mother, hush!" said Lucille, impatiently, snatching away a silken lock which the old woman was smoothing over her fingers; "you said you had somewhat to tell me; conceal it not, if it concern him or his."

"Thine own fears have sufficiently forewarned thee," my child. The girl hid her face in her loosened hair. "He will marry!" she whispered at last, as if afraid to give voice to the words. "But, mother, may he not love me still? Oh! the white woman's eyes may be as blue as our summer heavens, but will she love him as I have done? will her pale cheek burn as mine, at the sound of his footsteps?—will she toil for him through the heat of noon, and watch through the silence of the night?" Lucille raised not her head, and her companion, in compassion as it seemed, broke the pause.

"My child, he may love thee yet."

"Oh! thanks, mother, thanks, your words are ever true—now will I cast off the selfishness of this sorrow, and, if only he will sometimes say that he loves me still, be happy as of old."

"Lucille, what of thy child? he is wont to fill thy talk, and to-day thou hast told me nothing of him."

There was, alas! no shadow of shame on the young girl's cheek as she answered:—"He is well, mother, and fairer than ever; you say that my skin bears scarcely a trace of the swarthy hue of our people, but his—oh! it is purer than moonlight, our darkness has all fled into his eyes! I would that they had been blue, but he has at least his father's rosy mouth, and clustering golden hair. Did I tell you, mother, that when last Gabriel saw him, he wept?"

"Thou didst not, child. I am glad for thy sake that the babe is so fair, perchance even yet he may save thee, or even if Gabriel wed this Madeline de Beaucour, who is doomed by some fate or other to cross thy path in life; even her heart may be touched by the beauty of this child, and knowing the

wrongs of our race, she may stoop to save him from poverty and labor, and set him amongst his father's people. Thou wouldst be a happy mother then, Lucille!"

"I know not that I could take aught from her hand," answered the girl, proudly, looking unconsciously so majestic in the queenliness of her beauty, that her companion wondered for the hundredth time how Gabriel Delacroix, even with his pride of descent and worldly ambition, could resist its influence.

A moment's thought, however, and she sighed deeply. What availed the charm of that mien, or the warmth of that heart? Did a European ever wed with one of her despised race? and was not Madeline de Beaucour, whose name rumor had united with that of Gabriel, a daughter of the wealthiest family of all their wealthy oppressors?

Lucille at that moment was saddened by no such sorrowful reflection, her elastic nature had already thrown off for the time the burden of her grief. Of her poverty she thought little; a flower-maker by trade, she could always earn a sufficiency by the exercise of her graceful art, either amongst the luxurious ladies of the island, or by exporting her handiwork to Paris. To her position, sanctioned, alas! by custom amongst our race, there attached little idea of disgrace, and could she have hoped to retain something of her lover's affection, and to bring up her child in greater ease and refinement than she had known herself, she might have been happy.

"Mother," she said, after a pause, "it would relieve my heart to look upon the beauty of this white woman, Madeline; I know her father's chateau well; I will take the boy in my arms, and if she is alone, I will even speak to her, and hear the voice that has charmed my Gabriel. She cannot see the child unmoved, for he is fairer than the fairest babe ever cradled beneath their rich roofs."

"Do as thou wilt, my Lucille," replied the old crone fondly, "and," she added, with a bitterness that seemed far better to accord with her harsh features, "woe unto her and hers, if she show thee aught of the overweening pride of her people."

It was a bright burning day, with scarcely a breath stirring even through the cool jealousies of the Chateau Beaucour.

The fair Madeline lay languidly on a sofa, the delicacy of her transparent skin enhanced by the soft, white drapery and rich lace in which she was robed. The room was partially darkened, and on one side of her knelt a servant, who gently agitated the air with a large fan of beautiful eastern workmanship, while on the other, a young girl, who served as a companion to the heiress, was reading to her the last French novel.

Within the shrubbery, and not many paces from the house, poor Lucille had lain, crouching in the stifling heat, for many hours; anxiety to accomplish her object, and the fear of detection, having induced her to take up her station much earlier than was necessary.

The excessive heat, and the want of nourishment, had made her very faint, though her child, whom she had fed, and rocked to sleep in her arms, lay still and peaceful as a waxen image of infancy.

She had dressed herself with unusual care, and bore in a light basket on her arm, some of the choicest specimens of her skill—delicate, night-blossoming buds, and gorgeous tropical flowers, imitated with wonderful accuracy and grace.

At length her child awoke, and she began to fear from his restlessness that she should be obliged, for that day at least, to give up her plan, when from the lofty door of the chateau, Madeline de Beaucour, attended by a lady and gentleman, entered the grounds. Lucille's eyes dilated, and her bosom heaved, but no! it was not he, she saw that at a glance, and her gaze was again rivetted on the lady. Something like disdain flashed across her beautiful face as she looked, and then faded into an expression of relief and congratulation; truth to tell, the lady, with all the adjuncts of wealth and luxury around her, could not bear a moment's comparison with the dark-eyed Quadroon, and Lucille felt this instinctively.

Awhile she paused, irresolute, then caressing her child, slowly advanced, with her stately tread, to where Madeline had seated herself; but her tongue failed her, and she could only silently display her gracefully-fashioned flowers.

The lady looked on coldly, and made no answer to her companion's warm comments on the rare beauty of the mother and child. Her gaze was directed to the proffered flower-basket, and after turning over its contents with a careless hand, she glanced at the Quadroon.

"Your own work, I suppose? Ah! I would have purchased some, for they are really very well done, but you have nothing all white, I see, and these gaudy colours hardly suit my complexion."

"Strange, is it not?" she continued turning languidly to her companion, "that the absence of refinement in these people should be so perceptible even in their dress—they all prefer those glaring colors."

"Nay," he answered quickly, but with as little care to subdue his tones as she had displayed, "if they have all the gorgeous beauty of this splendid creature, they should wear no other hues."

Lucille stood motionless, only her curling lip betraying that she was conscious of their words—"Would the white magnolia, or the silver lotus, please the Lady Madeline?" she asked in her soft rich voice.

"Yes; either would do," replied the lady. "You may make me a wreath of the white magnolia, I think, and bring it here by next week—not later," she added, with a half smile, and waving her hand in token of dismissal. But the young girl by her side had started up—"Oh! Madeline, the child, have you noticed it? I never saw anything half so lovely! what magnificent eyes! may I not hold him a moment," she continued, with a pretty beseeching look at Lucille, and already taking one tiny hand in hers.

The mother's face softened, though she held the boy still closer to her bosom.

"Therese, Therese, of what are you dreaming?" exclaimed Madeline, angrily, rising from her seat. "I forbid you to touch the child; every other girl, of common modesty, shrinks from these low-born creatures, and the offspring of their depravity;" and she swept haughtily into the chateau with her companion, the abashed girl giving a deprecating glance at Lucille.

The Quadroon followed Madeline's retreating steps with a look of fiery disdain, and long after the party had disappeared, still she stood, transfixed to the spot, every muscle quivering with suppressed anger.

Her boy's soft fingers wandered in wonder over her averted face, re-called her thoughts, and she moved away with a step of yet stater pride than the lady.

Through that night and the next, and again the next, two women sat together in the cavern of the gray rock, of naught pure and holy was their talk, for as the beautiful face of the younger woman was

to something like the bitterness and cruel rage of the elder. Her occupation accorded little with the expression of her features, for she was skillfully fashioning, into all but living beauty, the snowy flowers and swelling buds of the white magnolia.

"Are you sure that it cannot fail, mother?" she whispered, after a long pause.

"As sure as that the sun will rise to-morrow."

"But you have not tried it," she added, with a creeping shudder.

For all answer the old crone tottered across the room, and uplifting the folds of a bright-hued shawl which lay heaped upon the floor, displayed the motionless form of a small mountain goat. It seemed to have lain down and died there with a struggle, so peaceful was its attitude. The girl shuddered violently as her companion dragged the body across the cave, and precipitated it over the hill side.

"No son shall she live to bear him," muttered the old woman, fiercely, as she took the wreath from the girl's hand; then drawing a phial from her bosom, she poured into each open cup and half-closed bud, a few drops of clear white liquid.

The following day was one of rare festivity at the Chateau Beaucour. A grand fete, at which the heiress, in her bridal array, was to appear for the last time as Madeline Beaucour, had been planned; for the next morning was to see her the bride of Gabriel Delacroix. As she sat in her chamber, robing for the ball, she was told that a Quadroon girl waited without, asking to see her.

"Ah! my white magnolia wreath," she said grily, "it will be more becoming than this tiera of pearls; bring the girl here, Therese, quickly." With her own hands, Lucille placed the clustering flowers amid the lady's hair, and then retired with a deep reverence. Through the open windows she watched the bride elect, threading with him the graceful mazes of the dance, her cheek flushed, her blue eyes sparkling.

Still she watched on, and prayed with clenched hands, until she saw the lady's cheek blanch, and her hand seek her brow with a troubled gesture. Then she laughed wildly, and sped away from the perfumed air and the brilliant light of that festive scene. Even as she fled, the bride elect had fallen to the earth, and was borne to her room, silent and motionless. Only when they uncovered her pale bosom, and loosened her shining hair, her hand, in obedience to some strange spell, sought the flowers on her brow, and none could remove them.

The next sun rose upon her, a bride indeed in her bridal array, fair and flower-crowned, but cold, voiceless, and still forever.

THE BAGHI-NUK.

It sometimes happens that two individuals of utterly dissimilar tastes and dispositions are thrown together by God's command, and under circumstances which make them thenceforward sworn allies, or what is far better, sincere friends for life, without the encumbrance of any oath of fealty. It so chanced that Mark Thorne and I, both cadets, were fellow-passengers in the *David Scott* bound for Madras. He was a fine robust young fellow of nineteen, two years my senior, and more than double that time my superior in every quality and qualification that fits a man for active duties. Bold, dashing, yet neither presumptuous nor scornful, he soon became a favourite with everybody; and though not handsome—for a defect in one of his cheek-bones, occasioned by an accident in extreme youth, marred the symmetry of one side of his face—his fine dark eyes, genial and expressive, and well-proportioned figure, were decidedly in his favour. Fond of all masculine sports, jocular and jovial, yet without boisterousness or coarse habits, he was little addicted to reading; whilst I, the opposite of all this, was a shy, sickly lad, much given to the perusal of sentimental romances, timid and awkward, with a strong tendency to secret verse-making—the least likely individual in the world to become the intimate companion of one whose character was so different. I am not too proud to confess that the interest he took in me might have had its rise in a sort of commiseration. He saw my embarrassment and restraint when quizzed by less generous shipmates than himself; and thence sprang up a desire and a determination to defend me. Moreover, it so happened that at Madeira, where we landed for a day, I awkwardly stepped from the boat which was taking us ashore into the deep sea, where, not being a swimmer, I might have rested till now, had not Mark Thorne instantly plunged into the water, and, at the peril of his life, rescued me. From that day he accounted me as his particular charge—patronised me with the affection of an elder brother, and was the kindly means of improving me into a passably manly and rational youth. As for me, I was proud of his friendship, and loved him beyond all my former experience and attachment. As it was, I am not sure that I did not exercise some beneficial influence over him, in my turn, for I believe that I inoculated him with a share of my love of books.

Amongst our fellow-passengers there were but two characters who need specification in my narrative—Mrs. Irwin, the wife of a civilian, returning to India, and a little bright-eyed, tawny-skinned girl, the daughter of her Mohammedan ayah, who died at the commencement of our voyage, leaving Hazara to the protection of her kind mistress. It seems that the ayah had been for many years the attendant of Mrs. Irwin—had married a worthless creature, who had abandoned her, taken to evil courses, and latterly escaped from justice, having joined a party of plunderers, and been suspected of even worse crimes than robbery. Hazara took a wonderful fancy to Mark, inasmuch that it became a standing jest of the quarter-deck to ask him how his little swarthy wife was—a joke that, though received by him with a laugh, excited furious anger in the youthful ayah, whose fiery nature Mrs. Irwin had some difficulty in controlling. Hazara, not yet twelve, was a woman in feeling and thought, and the susceptibility of her temperament called for more serious restraint than the gentle disposition of her mistress was accustomed to exercise. When we landed at Madras, her grief was so uncontrollable, that a new light struck upon all of us, and Mark himself felt it a relief to be rid of her presence.

We were separated—he and I—and when we met again, after some five years, it was not as strangers, for the epistolary link which unites severed friends had been faithfully kept in repair. I was then *en route* to rejoin my regiment at Nagpore, and he was holding a staff-appointment at Bellary, where I had determined on remaining his guest for a week. In the Madras presidency there is no hotter station than Bellary, and no hotter man than Mark; and of all in the year, the hottest time is the hot season, when, with cramped quarters, and a hot sun, I jumped on board a steamer, and cool myself by the sea breeze.

Bungalow—was the sultriest in my experience, just begun to throw out his *avant-courier* beams, which had no dewy grass to sweep over, came with a kiss that menaced increasing heat as the day grew. Cantonment of Bellary is placed amidst a grotesque of rocky mountains; and as I moved on languidly upon a cluster of singularly shaped cliffs on the sandy plain, amongst which, nestling in a cranny, beneficially shaded by an enormous banyan-tree, I observed the red and white flag of a *tekiyah*, or shrine, where the buried remains of some saintly devotee is watched over by a fakir, or religious mendicant of the Moslem creed; and sure enough, as I drew near, I became aware of a gaunt and grisly man, who stood in earnest conversation with a female, half hidden by one of the corner pillars of the quadrangular structure which composed the dervish's tomb. At my approach, disturbed by the hum of the palanquin-bearer's song, the speakers turned round, and I could not but observe the striking contrast presented by the singular beauty of the woman and the forbidding aspect of the man. My glance occasioned her to draw her *chudder* quickly round the lower part of her face, yet not so quickly as to prevent me from observing a style of expression which struck me as being familiar. Her dress was simply that of a Mohammedan woman in comfortable circumstances. Far from favourable was the impression her companion made on me; for his was one of those types of countenance which, originally handsome, become absolutely ugly from the collision of such passions as deform all beauty. As he thrust the woman roughly behind him, and came forward with the whining demand for alms that is observable only in the least worthy members of the fakirhood, an inconceivable dislike of the man pervaded, so to speak, my whole nature. There are few of us who have not, at some period or other of our lives, felt this mysterious, and apparently causeless, shrinking from certain individuals; and is it a superstitious weakness if I profess my belief that such feelings are given in warning, if not as prophecy? Time will show how far those sensations were warranted towards Boorhan Sha, the fakir of Bellary.

Warm as the climate was the welcome I received from Mark Thorne, whom I found but indifferently well, though surrounded by all the comforts of an elevated position. He told me that ere long he hoped to wed the only woman he had ever loved. "She is here," said he, "residing with her aunt, an old friend of mine and yours. You remember Mrs. Irwin?"

"Perfectly," said I. And after a moment's silence: "As sure as I live, I saw that wild, passionate little Hazara this morning." And I told him of the impression made upon me by the fakir.

"Yes," said he; "you are right. In another month I hope to be the husband of the sweetest creature on earth; and good and gentle as Mrs. Irwin is, I shall be glad to take her niece to a home of her own, where she will be free from the strange but very unmistakable tyranny which Hazara exercises over that household. She is a singular girl, and since Mr. Irwin's decease has managed to regulate all the widow's actions; herself influenced, I have reason to believe, by that odious fakir, Boorhan Sha, her father."

"Oblivious, indeed," I added, "I cannot account for the disagreeable impression he made on me. But what else is known about him?"

"It appears," said Mark, "that he treated his wife—whom you may recollect as Mrs. Irwin's ayah—so cruelly, that her husband, as collector of Cuddapah, where they then were, interfered, and had him punished. He disappeared for some years, and then started up all at once at Nagpore, where I first saw him. He was then, as now, a fakir; but his conduct, in insulting some English ladies, came under the eye of the residents; and I had the merit, for such I account it, of having him seized, and in accordance with the judgment of a *panchayat* (native jury), he was severely flogged, and obliged to leave the cantonment. Neither my astonishment nor my regret was small to find him, after five years, established here, and in close correspondence with Mrs. Irwin, whose indulgent affection towards his daughter blinded her to the insolent intrusiveness of the fellow. His looks, as I pass him, constantly remind me of the *dawra*—the revenge he vowed against me, when I superintended his expulsion from Nagpore."

A week passed pleasantly at Bellary; my friend's temporary indisposition had disappeared, and I was introduced to Margaret Douglas. She was a sweet gentle creature, evidently much attached to him; and there was nothing to anticipate but happiness in the union which was so soon to be solemnized, and to assist at which I had consented to apply for leave—leave granted as soon as solicited. I cannot say that during this period any suspicions were excited in my mind by the assuredly eccentric conduct of Hazara, for I had come to consider her simply as a girl of passionate and capricious disposition, so spoiled by the over-indulgence of a weak mistress as to render her both presuming and intrusive. More than once I was cognizant of her almost insolent behaviour to Margaret, and more than twice the same idea that haunted me on board ship flitted across my thoughts, and I set her down in my mind as being, so to speak, in love with Mark. But I kept such thoughts to myself, whether wisely or well, I dare not say. However, it so befell, that a few nights before the day fixed for the marriage ceremony, Mrs. Irwin, contrary to her habits, complained of her attendant, and she had observed it.

"Why, yes," was the reply. "I am quite angry this morning because I swallowed (fasting) a magical draught, which will not only increase my appetite, but will also appear youthful in the eyes."

"How ridiculous!" said such a fool."

"She has been to see Mrs. Irwin, and he has seen her."

"Well," and pleased to see the girl's face, I said, "I am not surprised."

"I am not surprised," said I, "that you should be so angry with her."