

"Oh!" he moaned to me as I stooped down to talk to him, "Why did this happen? why did they not choose some one else? why did they kill my beautiful boy?"

I might have told him why it happened. That it had happened because he, in common with hundreds of others in this city, brought up his son improperly. Let him loose upon society when he ought to have been at school. Allowed him money for cigars, and, it may be, for worse vices, when he should have given him nothing but marbles. That it happened because he had devoted his whole soul to the accumulation of money; and so long as he made successful operations, did not care to examine into his son's habits or associates. That it happened because he had set the youth a vicious example of luxury and extravagance himself. That it had happened because he mocked at God's law, and fancied that *his* child's principles and intellect could be sooner matured than was allowed in the universal course of nature. I might have told him all this and a great deal more when he moaned out that sorrowful question to me as he crouched upon the ground, but I was silent, for I too loved the boy, and sorrowed for him bitterly.

At last the poor old man rose up. He cast a long, sad look upon the pale, bloodless face of the corpse. Then lifting one of the stiff arms, he let it fall gently, saying, with a wistful look at me,

"This was my son, Sir!"

#### THE SINGER'S DREAM.

ONCE upon a time, there lived in the Rheinland a peasant boy, of whose lawful name it concerns me not to know or tell, seeing that all men called him the Singer. And that was a fit name, inasmuch as the child was unlike other children; not for his sad eyes, or his long yellow hair, but that he, always and ever, from his cradle on, had sung instead of speaking.

If a child's pains touched him, a low, minor cadence parted his lips; if a child's joyfulness bubbled up in his heart, he uttered it in some buoyant song, that floated higher than the lark's and made the dullest day bright. He sung often in his sleep wonderful hymns of praise, and the church echoed, at all hours of prayer, with such pure anthems that many went to hear the Singer who had not entered there for priest or mass.

But as the child grew toward manhood he seemed not to become old—no childish pleasure lost its freshness to his soul; still he found treasures in the glitter and tint of stones; loved the inimitable grace and recognized the distinct personality of flowers; the birds he fed daily at the window, and paved the brook with round, white pebbles. Even Gyna, the child he best loved, shot up into gracious girlhood, and became a woman before his eyes, still he was an unconscious child; and when the girl—herself loving, but yet a woman—would have roused the man to life and action by some acute sting of jealousy, the Singer only looked at her with wistful surprise, and turned away sighing very softly.

In time came a sadder change—strange languors and inabilities unstrung his frame—work became impossible to him. The peasant's son could not labor, he could only sing, daily, indeed, more exquisite harmonies, but they made neither bread nor salt; and the housewife that was in his dead mother's place reviled the boy, because he ate without toil. Sometimes he ceased singing, and addressed himself to the vineyard, but with little use, for the feeble hands trembled and the eyes filled too readily for such care-taking work; and I know not but he would have starved, had not the laborers who heard him sing agreed among themselves to feed him, if he would beguile the tediousness of their tasks with his music.

So he lived; but these songs were irksome, and he grew daily wearier and weaker, till one day he begged of the housewife a loaf of brown bread, and with an earthen cup in one hand went away to find life in another place.

Long did the child journey silently on; some saw and loved his tender childlike face, and fed him, not with bread alone, but with gentle words and loving looks; others were rougher, but none cruel; and his songs became, through his open heart, sweet and clear as never before. Yet with all these grew daily a shadow in his eyes; some pain and longing stirred incessantly and ached about his heart; and those who watched his sleep saw his thin hands stretched toward the stars, and heard broken words of eager, awful sadness fall like dying prayers from his dream-singing.

Summer, winter, and spring passed over him as the winds over an air-harp; but they passed again and again without quenching the fire in his eyes, or stilling the heart-pain that consumed him. Life staid by him as a spectre haunts its forgetful dwelling; he neither desired or dreaded its shivering tenure, that still hung tremblingly above him. At last, one day, he strayed into the deep forest—trees closed archwise above his path; the honey-bees sung on either hand their labor-anthem; the red and yellow blossoms swung their gay bells to call the deluding butterflies; birds dropped from bough to bough, sliding on their own songs; winds whispered strange mysteries to the nodding branches; the very rocks bore up lovingly crowds of tiny moss-cups, jeweled with scarlet; and vines tangled their delicate sprays and blood-flushed tendrils with fond insufficiency over and around the leaning tree-trunks.

No creature feared the Singer: squirrels eyed him from their knotty perches with soft, shy looks; the panting hare forgot to leave her form; and the wild dove cooed murmurously from an oak-bough as he passed; while a fearless doe and her fawn, pausing at a limpid spring to drink, drooped their erect ears, and bent their graceful heads again to the bright water, sure of safety from him. Out of the marshy spots myriads of blue violets looked at him innocently, and quaint, brown blossoms, with curiously-scented golden anthers swayed back and

forth graciously on their lithe stems. Here and there a scarlet fly gleamed swiftly in the pine branches, or a crested kingfisher dashed aslant the drooping elms; while, far overhead, seen through interlaced leaves, sailed a calm eagle, regnant and self-poised.

All these the Singer beheld with a new strength gathering in his frame; his chilly veins burned and leaped with unwonted fire; his sorrowful eyes shone light and peace; and a tender rose-glow seemed to glitter and quiver all about him, in whose soft transfiguration he to Nature, and Nature to him, renewed severally their primeval type.

Lingeringly he glided onward till the vaulted branches grew lower and thinner, and the trees dwindled about his way; presently he gained a bare rock on whose summit clung a hemlock tree, so crushed inward by the rare air of the extreme height as scarce to seem a tree. Weary and faint, yet with nerve and brain tense as the expectant cord of a bow, the Singer leaned his head against the evergreen boughs and listened. He had climbed far above the mixed voices of earth, and their hushed murmur only heightened the invisible pressure that seemed to bind a heavy crown about his temples and weigh down his eyelids. Eternal silence was around him; miles away the black forests slept on the mountain sides, sweeping up the gradual slopes, and falling back from the brink of fierce crags; below them green hills, silvered by the breezes that ran along them with aerial feet, or adorned with goodly orchards borne up on their broad shoulders, stood everlastingly quiet and strong; and at their feet lay the leveled meadows, through whose golden-green expanse stole blue rivers, muffling the liquid bells that they had tinkled down the rocks from their native springs, as a child hushes its baby mirth in the new repose of youth and love.

As the Singer sat watching the wide, expressive face of earth, an old sadness trembled on his lips and darkened in his eyes. Here and there, ever through his life, he had caught floating accords of sound, of color, and of thought, that haunted him like glimpses of another being, and spelled out dimly to his soul some vast system of harmonies that it became the gradual hope and vision of his existence to discover. But where should he find a teacher? who should note and utter for him the divine chords whose echo pursued him like a fate? Here the universe sent up its silent pulses to his lips with a thrilling vibration that no sound destroyed; and as he sat and mused with painful delight on the possibilities of creation, a wind arose in the deep valley, and creeping over mountain and crag, stirred the hemlock against whose rugged boughs he leaned; the light murmur stole, song-like, over his brain, and as a baby, lulled by the half-conscious singing of the happy mother-heart against which it rests, sleeps with a smile, so the Singer closed his eyes over their last tears, and with drooped head fell into a vague slumber.

Still to himself he seemed awake, and gazing with wakeful earnestness at the heaps of pearl-white cloud that thronged the sky, above the furthest hill-tops, till, without a start or a glimmer of surprise, he saw them, one after another, take the shape of colossal angels, with serene glory on their brows, as if they saw the sun arising in strength, and with wings of such unearthly tints as never met the eye of man, or were named of his lips.

As the celestial creatures drew nearer, through the parting air, the Singer perceived that each clasped his arms over a harp of rough gold, strung for each with different gems. One flashed a diamond light: one was moonlit with pearls: another glowed in the hidden fire of mystic opals: and lucent rubies, cool emeralds, garnets of love-warm depth, clustered on the several strings of each seraphic instrument; and while gathering about the cliff whereon he sat, each drew from the folds of their trailing robes a written score, the Singer forgot the glory of their brows in the look of pale helplessness that seemed to seal their closed lips, and the piteous, trustful appeal that dimmed their searching eyes.

Some sixth sense lit his human soul; neither voice nor articulate sound pealed from angel to angel, but an emanation of meaning, like the mist a hidden river utters to the sun, interpreted the thoughts of those immortal essences to the perceptions of his mortal brain. He felt their intent gaze tremble through earth, and knew that each asked from Nature and each other the harmony of their several parts. One had the wandering resonances of air noted for the task of his diamonded strings; the countless sounds of inanimate earth—pathetic, languid, tranquil—were drawn out from the emerald chords; from the changeful embers of the opal came the heights and depths of human thought and feeling—now faint as dead ashes, now exultant as fire; plaintive water-sounds, waves that dash, weeping brooks, slow-rippling rivers, the drowsy fall of rain, the tiny laugh of boiling springs—these the pearls emitted from their gleaming rows; animate nature spoke imperative life from the warm garnets; light drew its shaded tones of color from the clear rubies. But though the seraphs, standing silently before the Singer, drew out with skillful hands the power of their several harps, they made angry discords with each other, or forced and monotonous unisons, that dimmed the brightness on their foreheads and wove a deeper shadow over their eyes, and the Singer knew, where it stood on their divine faces, the shadow of his own pain.

A few weak and hesitating notes only did the seraphs strike, and then, quieting their perplexed faces to patience, leaned on their harps and bent earthward.

Gradually the patience heightened into expectation, tremulous with joy; and, following the line of their irradiate eyes, the Singer saw, far below, the shape of a worn and solitary man climbing the mountain-side. Bent and sorrowful looked the classic head, with its fair waving

locks; but the face he could not see. More and more earnest grew the expectant choir as up the painful steep the new-comer toiled; at length he stood among them, and with keen but submissive joy they gave into his hand the written scores they held, and waited breathlessly his voice; but there was no speech. Silently, in that silent choir, the man arranged the angelic harmony; and as he restored to each angel his part, and turned his face to the East, the Singer shuddered with an awful sweetness of recognition. The wan, noble face—the eyes of supernatural fire—the unstained forehead—the glittering hair—where had he seen them? But the seraph harps

were strung; the vision looked adoringly heavenward; the birth-pang of a new life ran sharply through the sleeping Singer—he knew himself! and, borne upward on an unutterable harmony—full, resolute, triumphant—stronger than the gorgeous pinions of the six seraphs, he, the dominant seventh, ascended from earth to glory.

Beside his mortal garment stood Gyna, weary and weeping; faithfully her repentant longing had tracked his steps; and there he slept, not awake to greet her! She stooped, with shy tenderness, to awaken him with a kiss; but his calm lips chilled her to the soul. He was past Love, rapt into Immortality.

## Monthly Record of Current Events.

### THE UNITED STATES.

CONGRESS met on the 4th of December, and the President's Message was communicated on the same day. Referring, at the outset, to the diminished crops and the visitations of pestilence which have marked the year, the President proceeds to say that, as a nation, we have been but slightly affected by the wars of Europe, and that it has been his earnest endeavor to maintain peace and friendly intercourse with all nations. Notwithstanding the course we have hitherto pursued of avoiding all entangling alliances, and our remoteness from Europe, some of its governments have manifested an increased disposition to influence, and in some respects direct, our Foreign policy. In plans for adjusting the balance of power among themselves, they have assumed to take us into account, and would constrain us to conform our conduct to their views; and one or another of them has from time to time undertaken to enforce arbitrary regulations, contrary, in many respects, to the established principles of international law. The United States, uniformly respecting and observing that law in their foreign intercourse, can not recognize any such interpolations therein as the temporary interests of others may suggest. Leaving the transatlantic nations to adjust their political system as they may think best, we may well assert the right to be exempt from all annoying interference on their part. Systematic abstinence from intimate political connection with distant foreign nations does not conflict with giving the widest range to our foreign commerce. The government of the United States stands prepared to repel invasion, and provides no permanent means of foreign aggression. The rapid expansion of our territory has been regarded with disquieting concern by some European powers, which ought not, considering their own conquests, to look with unfriendly sentiments upon the acquisitions of this country, which have been in every instance honorably obtained. Our foreign commerce has reached a magnitude nearly equal to that of England, and exceeding that of any other nation. Experience shows that when the principal powers of Europe are engaged in war the rights of neutral nations are endangered. This consideration has led at various times to the assertion of the principle that free ships make free goods; but it has never been generally recognized as a principle of international

law. At the beginning of the present war Great Britain and France announced their purpose to observe it for the present—not as a recognized international right, but as a concession for the time being. This action on their part led our government to make a proposition for special conventions with the several powers of Europe, embracing the rule that free ships should make free goods; and also that neutral property, other than contraband, on board enemies' ships, should be exempt from confiscation. Russia acted promptly in the matter, and a convention was concluded between that country and the United States, providing for the observance of these principles, not only as between themselves, but also as between themselves and all other nations which shall enter into like stipulations. The King of the Two Sicilies has indicated his willingness to enter into such a convention. The King of Prussia entirely approves of the project of a treaty, but proposes an additional article, providing for the renunciation of privateering. This was declined by the United States, from obvious considerations. The navy of England is at least ten times as large as that of the United States. In case of war the latter, without the means of resort to its mercantile marine, would be at a great disadvantage; and in a war with any of the secondary naval powers, the greater extent of our commerce would expose us to equal danger. If the leading powers of Europe would agree in exempting private property from seizure upon the ocean by armed cruisers as well as by privateers, the United States would readily meet them upon that ground.—The Reciprocity Treaty with Great Britain has gone into effect. There is a difference of opinion between the two governments as to the boundary line of Washington Territory; the President recommends the appointment of a Commission for its adjustment. He advises also the extinguishment, upon just terms, of certain rights guaranteed by the treaty of 1846 to the Hudson's Bay Company, embracing the right to navigate the Columbia river, which have already led to serious disputes. Difficulties have recently arisen with France, which, though they threatened to be serious, have been satisfactorily adjusted. M. Soulé, our Minister to Spain, was recently excluded from France by order of the government; but as subsequent explanations show that it was not the right of transit, but only the right of residence that was

denied him, he has since passed through France to his post at Madrid. Our relations with Spain have suffered no change. Since the revolution in that country no favorable opportunity has been presented for the adjustment of the serious questions between Spain and the United States; there is reason to believe that the new Ministry is more disposed than the old one was to concede our just demands. Negotiations are pending with Denmark to discontinue the practice of levying tolls on our vessels and their cargoes passing through the Sound. The practice is sanctioned not by international law but by special treaty; the President recommends the discontinuance of the treaty by which we have recognized the right. A treaty for commerce and navigation has been concluded with Japan, and only awaits the exchange of ratifications to be effective. Numerous claims upon Mexico for wrongs and injuries to our citizens remain unadjusted, in spite of all our endeavors to secure a favorable consideration for them. Our government has done all in its power to prevent aggressions upon Mexico, though it has not fully succeeded in every case. By treaties with the Argentine Confederation we have secured the free navigation of the La Plata and some of its larger tributaries; negotiations, hitherto unsuccessful, are still pending with Brazil, for the free navigation of the Amazon. Misunderstandings have arisen with Great Britain concerning the provisions of the treaty of 1850 in regard to Central America; our Minister in London is pressing negotiations to bring them to a close. The President vindicates the destruction of Greytown by the sloop of war *Cyane*, on the ground that its inhabitants had been guilty of flagrant outrages upon the rights and property of Americans, and that there was no recognized authority to which we could look for redress. The transaction has been the subject of complaint on the part of some foreign powers, and has been characterized with more of harshness than of justice. The President thinks it would not be hard to find repeated instances in the history of other states, which would fully justify the chastisement of Greytown.—Passing from foreign to domestic affairs, the financial condition of the country first engages attention. At the end of last year there was a balance in the Treasury of \$21,942,892; the receipts of the year have been \$73,549,705—making the total of available resources \$95,492,597. The expenditures of the year have been \$51,018,249; the payments on the public debt have reached \$24,336,380; and there is a balance in the Treasury of \$20,137,967. The public debt remaining unpaid is \$44,975,456, redeemable at different periods within fourteen years. As it is quite certain that the revenue of the next year, though probably less than that of last, will still be greater than the expenditures, a reduction of duties upon imports is recommended. Further legislation is needed for the security of government papers and account-books, which in some cases are claimed by government officers as their own private property. An increase of the military force to be employed in the Indian territory is recommended as imperatively necessary; four new regiments, two of infantry and two of mounted men, it is believed will be sufficient. A revision of the laws concerning the organization of the army is also recommended. An increase of the naval force is also required, for the defense of our coast and the protection of our commerce. Further legislation is also urged for the government and discipline of our commercial ma-

rine, with a view to greater security, and also for the punishment of insubordination, cowardice, or other misconduct, on the part of officers and mariners, producing injury or death to passengers on the high seas.—In the Post-office Department the expenditures of the year amount to \$8,710,907; the receipts being \$6,955,586—showing a deficiency of \$1,755,321—which, however, is \$361,756 less than the deficiency of the year before. The revenue has increased \$970,399. No increase is anticipated for the coming year. The cost of mail transportation has been \$495,074 greater this year than it was the year before.—The number of acres of the public lands sold during the year was 7,035,735, for which \$9,285,533 was received. The whole quantity surveyed was 11,070,935 acres, and 8,190,017 acres have been brought into market. The President renews suggestions previously made concerning donations of lands to aid in the construction of railroads, the policy of internal improvements, and the need of reorganizing the judicial system of the United States.

The Report of the Hon. James Guthrie, the Secretary of the Treasury, sets forth the detailed receipts and expenditures of the year, the aggregates of which are given in the President's Message, and presents estimates of the receipts and expenditures for the next year. The receipts from customs have not fallen off from the pressure in the money market, as it was feared they would; the increased exportations, and a more uniform and better valuation of goods, are assigned as the reasons for this result. The Reciprocity Treaty with Great Britain, which introduces free trade with the British colonies, and the short crop, will diminish the receipts from customs for the remainder of the present year. There has been an increase of 395,892 tons in the tonnage of our foreign and coastwise commerce during the year. The imports are \$26,321,317 in excess over our exports—the latter including \$38,000,000 of specie and bullion. The Secretary recommends a reduction of the revenue from customs, in accordance with the recommendation of last year—which proposed having only five schedules of duty; the first of 100, the second of 20, the third of 15, the fourth of 10, and the fifth of 5 per cent.; and also to extend the free list very considerably. He proposes to remove the duty from the raw materials used in several articles of manufactures, as is already done by other countries. There has been, during the year, a large increase of articles of domestic manufacture, and it is believed that this increase during the coming year will be still greater. The revenue from duties on articles which are to be admitted free of duty by the Reciprocity Treaty was \$1,524,457; so that the revenue will be diminished to that extent. A repeal of the fishing bounties is recommended.—The system of monthly settlements with the Collectors of Customs has been carried out, except on the Pacific, and has been found to work well. The condition of the various offices subordinate to the Treasury department is very satisfactory. There has been \$16,152,170 of silver coined during the year, and furnished for circulation; but the full benefits of the silver coinage can not be realized while small bank notes are encouraged under bank charters, and made current by the patronage of the community. The amount of gold and silver coin in the country is estimated at \$241,000,000; of which, \$60,000,000 is in the banks, \$20,000,000 in the independent treasury, and the rest in circulation.



It is in the power of the States, by prohibiting the banks from issuing small notes for circulation, and by making the specie currency the basis of their own receipts and expenditures, to give the predominance to specie. The disorder now felt in money matters is attributed by the Secretary to the failure of many banks, to the large imports, and to the want of confidence between the borrower and the lender: he says it can not properly be attributed to the shipment of gold and silver, which is only a consequence of the other causes. The work on the Coast Survey makes good progress, and if supported a few years longer by Congress, will give us a complete knowledge of our coast and harbors, to the great advantage of commerce. Further action is recommended in order to provide the means of rescuing human life, in case of shipwreck, along our coast. The Secretary recommends additional provision for the public welfare upon several points of minor interest, to which it is not important to make more specific reference in this place.

The Report of Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, states the authorized strength of the army at 14,216 officers and men, while its actual strength is only 10,745. This difference is gradually disappearing under the operation of the law to encourage enlistments by increasing the pay. But little success has attended the efforts to remove the Indians from the Southern part of Florida, in accordance with their treaty stipulations: more vigorous efforts are in progress, which promise better results. In the other departments the Indians have repeatedly come into collision with our troops, and depredations upon frontier residents and upon emigrants are of frequent occurrence. In the West hostilities have occurred with the Sioux, the most powerful and warlike tribe of the West. In Texas the aid of volunteers has been frequently invoked. In New Mexico serious hostilities have been repressed by the prompt and energetic action of the troops employed there; but depredations upon the inhabitants are still of frequent occurrence, and in the department of the Pacific outrages of the most revolting character have been perpetrated upon families of emigrants to California and Oregon. The troops have been actively engaged in the effort to punish these aggressions. On the 16th of August, Lieutenant Grattan, of the Sixth Infantry, was sent with thirty men, by the Commander of Fort Laramie, to punish a band of the Sioux from which emigrants to the Pacific had suffered very severely. The entire detachment was massacred by about 1500 Indians, who formed and executed a deliberate plan for that purpose. It has not hitherto been found possible to concentrate the troops sufficiently to prevent these outrages without too great an exposure of the frontier settlements. Our entire loss, in the several actions with the Indians during the year, has been four officers and sixty-three men killed, and four officers and forty-two men wounded. For military purposes, the territory of the United States is divided into five commands: (1.) The Department of the East, embracing the whole country east of the Mississippi, having 2800 miles of seaboard, 1800 miles of foreign, and 200 miles of Indian frontier, has only eleven of its fifty garrisons furnished with men—leaving the remainder exposed to attack from any naval power. The total force in this department is 1574 officers and men, of which 500 are employed on the Indian frontier of Florida. (2.) The Department of the West, including all the country between the Mississippi

and the Rocky Mountains, has a seaboard foreign and Indian frontier of 2400 miles, 2000 miles of routes traversed by emigrants, and an Indian population of 180,000, a large portion of which are hostile to us: the force in this department is 1855 officers and men. (3.) The Department of Texas, with a seaboard of 400 miles, a foreign and Indian frontier of nearly 2000, communications of 1200 miles through an Indian population of 30,000, has a force of 2886. (4.) The Department of New Mexico has an Indian and foreign frontier of 1500 miles, Indian communications of over 1000, an Indian population of 50,000, and a military force of 1654. (5.) The Department of the Pacific has a seaboard frontier of over 1500 miles, an Indian frontier of 1600, more than 2000 miles of communication through an Indian country, an Indian population of 134,000, who are becoming formidable from concentration, a knowledge of fire-arms, and experience in their use, and a military force of only 1305 officers and men. The Secretary urges that this force in the several departments is entirely inadequate to the service required of it, and recommends such an increase as shall give greater security to our frontiers against Indian hostilities. The extension of our boundaries into the Indian territories, renders it quite likely that the ensuing years will be marked by still more numerous and more serious outrages than have been experienced hitherto. The Secretary insists that it is much more economical to maintain a regular army sufficient to suppress these outrages, than to rely upon militia force. During the past twenty-two years over thirty millions of dollars have been expended in the repression of Indian hostilities, to say nothing of the immense sums lost by the destruction of private property, etc. Much of this might have been saved, if the regular force had been sufficient to prevent the outbreaks which it was afterward necessary to suppress. The estimates for the support of the army during the coming year are \$681,688 more than those of the last year. This increase is caused by the law of last session fixing higher rates of payment for the rank and file of the army. An increase in the pay of officers is also recommended; the present rates having been fixed more than forty years ago, when money had a much higher value as compared with the price of food. Additional legislation is needed to settle questions of rank, to equalize the rates of payment, and to remedy other inconveniences in the department. Among other amendments it is proposed to give effect to brevet rank only when the President may see fit to authorize it. The organization of the staff is discussed at length, and a new system is recommended. It is proposed that there shall be nine Brigadier-Generals, instead of five, as at present, so that there may be one for each of the five departments, one for Quartermaster-General, one for Adjutant-General, and two for Inspectors-General. Various details are suggested in reference to the other departments, as well as to various branches of the general service. Improvements of an important character have been made in the academy at West Point, and experiments continue to be made to test the utility of various new inventions in fire-arms. The survey of the northern and northwestern lakes has made steady progress, and steps have been taken to secure the construction of roads in our new territories authorized by law.

The Report of Mr. Campbell, the Postmaster-