

yond Paris. One of them carried a card, which he seriously presented whenever introduced to a Frenchman, on which was engraved as a crest two alligators fighting with their tails, and under this, *Le Baron d'Attakapas*. The device of the other I forget, but he sported the name of *Le Comte de Plaquemines*.

OF LOSS.

STRETCHED silver-spun the spider's nets;
The quivering sky was white with fire;
The blackbird's scarlet epaulets
Reddened the hemlock's topmost spire.

The mountain in his purple cloak,
His feet with misty vapors wet,
Lay dreamily, and seemed to smoke
All day his giant calumet.

From farm-house bells the noonday rung;
The teams that plowed the furrows stopped;
The ox refreshed his lolling tongue,
And brows were wiped, and spades were dropped;

And down the field the mowers stepped,
With burning brows and figures lithe,
As in their brawny hands they swept
From side to side the hissing scythe;

'Till sudden ceased the noonday task,
The scythes 'mid swatches of grass lay still,
As girls with can and cider flask
Came romping gayly down the hill.

And over all there swept a stream
Of subtle music, felt, not heard,
As when one conjures in a dream
The distant singing of a bird.

I drank the glory of the scene,
Its autumn splendor fired my veins;
The woods were like an Indian Queen
Who gazed upon her old domains.

And ah! methought I heard a sigh
Come softly through her leafy lips;
A mourning over days gone by,
That were before the white man's ships.

And so I came to think on Loss—
I never much could think on Gain.—
A poet oft will woo a cross
On whom a crown is pressed in vain.

I came to think—I know not how—
Perchance through sense of Indian wrong—
Of losses of my own, that now
Broke for the first time into song.

A fluttering strain of feeble words
That scarcely dared to leave my breast;
But like a brood of fledgeling birds
Kept hovering round their natal nest.

“O loss!” I sang—“O early loss!
O blight that nipped the buds of spring!
O spell that turned the gold to dross!
O steel that clipped the untried wing!”

“I mourn all days, as sorrows he
Whom once they called a merchant prince
Over the ships he sent to sea,
And never, never heard of since.

“To ye, O woods, the annual May
Restores the leaves ye lost before;
The tide that now forsakes the bay,
This night will wash the widowed shore.

“But I shall never see again
The shape that smiled upon my youth;
A mist of sorrow veils my brain,
And dimly looms the light of truth.

“She faded, fading woods, like you!
And fleeting shone with sweeter grace;
And as she died the colors grew
To softer splendor in her face.

“Until one day the hectic flush
Was veiled with death's eternal snow;
She swept from earth amid a hush,
And I was left alone below!”

While thus I moaned I heard a peal
Of laughter through the meadows flow;
I saw the farm-boys at their meal—
I saw the cider circling go.

And still the mountain calmly slept,
His feet with valley vapors wet;
And slowly circling upward crept
The smoke from out his calumet.

Mine was the sole discordant breath
That marred this dream of peace below.
“O God!” I cried—“give, give me death,
Or give me grace to bear thy blow!”

POLL JENNINGS'S HAIR.

IT is sometimes a relief to have a story without a heroine; and this distinction alone can I claim for mine. Nothing heroic or wonderful casts its halo about little Poll Jennings, the seventh daughter of Abe Jennings the South-side fisherman. Not even one of those miraculous poor cottages that are always so exquisitely clean, and have white curtains and climbing roses through all depths of poverty and suffering, held my little girl in its romantic shelter. Abe's house, lying between three of those low sand-hills that back the shore on our New England coast, like waves of land that simulate the sea, was not in the least attractive or picturesque. At first a mere cabin of drift-wood, the increasing wants and numbers of his family had, as it were, built themselves out in odd attachments—square, or oblong, or triangular, as wood came to hand, or necessity demanded—till the whole dwelling bore the aspect externally of a great rabbit-hutch or poultry-house, such as boys build on a smaller scale out of old boards from ruined barns, palings of fence, and refuse from carpenters' shops: though no constructive magazine furnished inside or outside of the fisherman's home; it was all fashioned from the waifs of a great Destroyer—all drift-wood from the sea, that raved and thundered half a mile off, as if yet clamorous for its prey. Still uncouth and rude as was its shaping, a poet might have found it more suggestive than any model cottage in the land—if a poet be not merely the rhymers of sentiment and beauty, but he whose creative soul,

from one slight thread of association spins a wide web of fancies, and tracks the idea through all its windings, till imagination becomes reality, and the real and the ideal are one. However, no poet ever entered there to talk or think all this nonsense; and the old walls, where teak, that an Indian forest missed, stood side by side with oak from English uplands and pine from the Æolian woods of Maine. The windows, that had been driven ashore, void of their crystal panes, from some full-freighted steamer, gone down too deep for any more wistful eyes to watch receding shore or hurrying storm-rack through the sashes; doors, that had swung to in the last lurch of the vessel, and made the state-rooms they guarded tombs of the dead—all these spoke nothing to the practical brain of old Abe Jennings, nor softened to any pathos the high spirits of his six rosy daughters, who laughed and romped and worked, as regardless of any outside suffering as if they were the world, and their sand-hills comprised all life and destiny. But Poll, the last and least of the seven, was one of those exceptional creatures that come as some new and strange variety of a flower does, as unlike all its congeners in tint and habit as if it were the growth of an alien soil and climate. Ruth and Mary and Martha, Nancy, Jane, and Adeline, were all straight and strong, with thick dark hair, varying only from the tar-black of Ruth's coarse curls to the shining deep-brown of Adeline's braids. Roses of the deepest dye bloomed on their faces; except Ruth, they were never sad or moody; they had their sweet-hearts and their frolics, and were altogether common-sense, ordinary, wholesome girls as one could find. Polly could lay claim to none of these charms or virtues; she was slight and pale, with great hazel eyes, that oftenest looked vague and dreamy; her very lips were colorless; and her skin, roughened and red, offered neither bloom nor purity to attract the eye, but her hair was truly magnificent. Of the deepest red, undeniably red as is the glossy coat of a bright bay horse, it fell to her feet in shining waves, so soft, so fine, yet so heavy, that it seemed as if the splendid growth had absorbed all the beauty and strength that should otherwise have been hers in face and form. But with this peculiar coloring came also the temperament of which it is the index—sensitive, passionate, shy as a quail, yet proud as only a woman can be. If Poll Jennings had been taught and trained to the height of her capacities, or even had the means of self-training, her latent genius would have dawned on her sphere in one shape or another; and perhaps an actress, perhaps an author, some star of art, some wonder of vocalization, might have delighted or astonished the world. But, happily for Poll, another and a better fate than these awaited her, though its vestibule was only a hut, and its locality the sand-hills of the Atlantic shore. Yet this special beauty of the child's—her resplendent hair—was made her peculiar torment. To her sisters and father it was red, and only red; and all the

jokes that people will waste on that tint—artist-ic, historic, exquisite as it may be—were lavished on Polly's head till hot tears filled her eyes and burning color suffused her face at the least allusion to it. Moreover, her physical capacity was far inferior to that of her sisters; her slight hands and arms could not row a boat through the rolling seas outside the bar; she could not toil at the wash-tub, or help draw a seine; and when a young farmer from inland came down "to salt," or a sturdy fisher from another bay hauled up his boat inside the little harbor of Squamkeag Light, and trudged over to have a talk with old Abe, it was never Poll who waded out into the mud, with bare white legs and flying hair, to dig clams for supper; or who, with a leather palm, in true sailor fashion, mended sails by the fireside, singing 'longshore songs at her work. Poll's place was never there: she shrank away to gather berries or hunt for gulls' eggs, or crouched motionless in a darker corner, her great luminous eyes fixed on some paneled fragment of the wall that hungry seas had thrown ashore, painting to herself the storm and the wreck till she neither heard nor saw the rough love-making that went on beside her. So it happened that Mary and Martha, the twins, married two young farmers up the country, and led the unpastoral lives that farming women in New England must lead—lives of drudgery and care. Nancy went off with a young fisherman over to Fire Island; Ruth, the oldest, had lost her lover, years gone by, in a whale-ship that sailed away and was never heard of more; while Jane was just about to be married to hers, mate on a New Haven schooner—"Mdse. to Barbadoes," as the shipping-list said; and Adeline laughed and coquetted between half a dozen of the roughest sort.

There were enough at home to do the work, and Ruth's set sobriety, Jane's boisterous healthiness, Adeline's perpetual giggle, none of them chimed with Poll's dreamy nature. A weary sense of her own incapacity oppressed her all the time; she could not work as they did; and, worst of all, the continual feeling that she was ugly, "red-headed," "white-faced," "eyes as big as a robin's," brooded over her solitary thoughts, and made her more sad, more lonely from day to day. Yet though no refinement of speech ever turned plain "Poll" into Pauline, and no suave ministrations of higher civilization toned her wild grace into elegance or wove her beautiful locks into the crown they should have been, she had her own consolations, for Nature is no foster-mother, and she took this sobbing child into her own heart. Polly's highest pleasure was to steal out from the cabin and wander away to the shore; there, laid at length among the rank grass whose leaves waved and glittered in the wind, she watched the curling waves of beryl sweep in to leap and break in thunder, while the spray-bells were tossed far and sparkling from their crests on the beaten sands, and the crepitation of those brilliant bubbles crushed beneath the wave scarce finished its fairy peal of artillery ere another