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## POETRY.

*From the Baltimore "Monument."*

### MOUNTAINS.

BY N. M. KNAPP.

Eternal monuments which heaven-ward tower,
Around whose peaks the storm clouds nightly lower,
Whose hoary crags are by the lightning scared
And rent by earthquakes years a-gone, which jarred
Earth's deep foundations, stirring in their bed
The darkest cavern'd of the ocean's dead—
Along whose sides the fir trees flaunt their boughs
Upon the wind—that sweeps around to rouse
The withered leaves, when autumn pipes the reed,
And "Father Time" spurs on his noiseless steed
To drop his hoary honors o'er the fading year,
And on his dying child to shed an icy tear.

Ye verdant altars!—from whose summits rise
A fragrant incense to the summer skies—
Upon whose sides the dews of heaven descend,
Like angel's tears, and on thy foliage blend,
As freely mingling as the tide of song,
Which swells at eve—and sweetly flows along
The woody base—and in each rocky dell
Repeats the sound, where sister echoes dwell,
That they may warble back the strains in air
And let surrounding vales their concert share.

Nature's observatories!—towering far
Above the storms, where every golden star
Sheds down a beautiful unsullied light
To gild the gloomy curtains of the night,
And aid the eye, which roams amid the spheres
To mark their path throughout the lapse of years.

Enchanted temples!—where the spirits dwell
Who haunt the poet with their magic spell—
Distract his brain with dreams, and thoughts sublime,
Which find relief in madness or in rhyme!—
Where Nature's children, wooed by Nature's calls,
Delight to seek, within thy mossy halls,
A shelter from the world, that ruthless foe,
Whose bitter persecution none may know,
But those by nature fledged for lofty flight,
Whose aspirations mock an envious sight,
And fill the grovelling souls with living hate
For deeds they lack the skill to emulate!

Ye sky-ward-tow'ring, grand, majestic piles!
What mighty hearts have throbbed in thy defiles,
Since Spartan bands, with their Leonidas,
Defied their millions in their mountain pass—
How Andreas Hofer blessed the silent glen,
Which gave him shelter from his fellow men—
How hunted Scots, in persecution's days,
Together warbled forth their mountain lays
To Him who walled around their high retreat,
And caused their hearts with trembling love to beat—
How doth thy praise the Switzer peasants swell—
Since thou hast nerved the heart of dauntless Tell—
And raptured gaze from summer valleys green,
Which sweetly bloom beneath the glaciers sheen,
Up to their Alps—the volleyed thunder's home,
Along whose dark ravines they love to roam,
And hear the rocks to answering rocks recall,
And woods re-echo to the waterfall.

Mighty sepulchres of the noble dead!
Whose crowns a leafy pall in autumn shed
Upon the bones of those who sunk below
The stainless mounds of winter's driven snow,
And gave their lives, upon the frozen height,
For what?—to make Ambition's crowns more bright!—
O, Hannibal! hearest thou the spirits call,
Who made thy name immortal by their fall?
And thou, Napoleon! countless shades demand
The meed of justice at thy reeking hand.
And thou, stern Charles! of freedom's sons the boast,
How many gallant souls thy pride hath cost,
Whose bones bestrew the mountain and the plain,
Beyond Borysthenes, in the Ukraine!

O, sacred mountains—mountains known of old!
Thy glory and thy worth are yet untold!
Ye barriers strong, which sheltered ancient Greece
Against the rude invaders of their peace,
Hœmus—Rhodhope—the Greeks still look on thee
As guardians of their ancient liberty!

But last—the rostrums of the mighty God,
From whence his word in thunder pealed abroad!—
Who in rhyme shall e'er attempt to tell
The grace that from thy lofty summits fell?
So wide a field here opes upon the mind,
With themes of wonder vast and undefined,
'Twere vain to urge my feeble numbers more—
I turn to Zion's Hill—and there adore!

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### An Alchemist's Fortunes.

BY MISS LAWRANCE,

*Author of "London in the Olden Time," &c.*

So, tho' the Chemist his great secret miss,
For neither in in art or nature is,
Yet doth his labor well repay
By good unsought discoveries by the way.
COWLEY.

From that remote period of society, when the benefit and importance of a "circulating medium" was first discovered, even to the present day, with what sincere devotion have all mankind bowed down to those tempting idols, gold and silver! No wonder was it, therefore, that, during the middle ages, an art which professed to transmute the baser metals into the precious should have been so highly esteemed by all classes, and so eagerly pursued; and no wonder, too, that, while the student in natural philosophy not unfrequently anticipated an unwelcome elevation on the gallows tree for enlarging the boundaries of knowledge, and the discoverer of new but inconvenient truths feared to make them public, lest, being hailed as an intellectual torch, he might, perchance, by aid of faggot and tar barrel, be converted into a *bona fide* one; the alchemist alone was welcomed into the council chamber, greeted in the palace, and received with warm and admiring homage, even in the hallowed limits of the cloister itself.

It would, however, be doing injustice to the votaries of this delusive science, did not we admit that, by many of them, the power of transmuting lead and tin into gold, (that ultimatum of the popular faith,) was considered as a low and contemptible acquisition, compared with the loftier objects which the "secret of secrets" offered to its discoverer. Power over all diseases, an insight into all knowledge, the gift of unfading deathless youth: these were the gorgeous phantoms that gilded with their delusive brightness the lone cell of the alchemist, for the true philosopher's stone was a key to unlock the mysteries of universal nature. No wonder was it, therefore, that the true "philosofer" turned haughtily aside from the paths of wealth and ambition, and, forsaking the substance for the shadow, the willing dupe of his golden dream, wandered scripless and purseless, amid an admiring world, that deemed his real poverty but a mere masque, assumed, like the threadbare dress of the miser, to conceal the wealth that he dared not openly display.

Nor had alchemy, although unremittingly pursued for near thirty years, done more for poor Gervase Forrester. In the sinister sense, it had certainly done much, for it had reduced him from a comfortable estate at Edmondton, which enabled him to keep hawk, and hound, and footcloth-horse, and serving man, to a mean house by the road side, about two miles from London, where, a distant relation having taken his son abroad with him, himself and his daughter, by the exercise of the most rigorous economy, barely contrived to live. Still, with all the wild and desperate enthusiasm of a genuine adept, who, in all his disappointments and losses, beholds so many trials of his faith and motives to additional perseverance, Gervase Forrester's attachment to the cause of his ruin grew in intensity from each repeated failure, and, darker as the clouds of sorrow gathered around, the delusive meteor of Alchemy beamed with more witching brightness.

If aught could have afforded poor Gervase Forrester's friends consolation, it would have been the remembrance that his unremitting pursuit of this delusive science had probably secured him from many dangers. During the whole disastrous period when England saw her sons set in battle array against each other for the Red and White Rose, he, closely locked in his garret, and poring over the crucible, scarcely ever inquired, scarcely ever thought of, that bitter civil contest, save to offer a fervent prayer that Christian men might live in unity together. And, throughout the plots and intrigues of Richard's short royalty, still Gervase Forrester held on his quiet studious course, too retired to become an object of suspicion, too poor to be a mark for envy; but the time was near at hand when, notwithstanding his guileless simplicity, notwithstanding his sad poverty, danger and sorrow were to visit his humble dwelling.

At the period when our tale commences, England, which, for two short years, had enjoyed the first fruits of that peace which bound on the brow of Henry Tudor the forfeit crown of York, was again upon the brink of civil war. The pretended Earl of Warwick had just appeared in Ireland, and the partizans of the blighted White Rose had begun exultingly to prophecy her revival. Emissaries were abroad, plots were in agitation, and people began once more to eye each other with distrust; little did our poor alchemist heed these things; alas! better for him if he had!

One clear evening in May, as Gervase Forrester sat in his meanly furnished room, mournfully watching the white and long fingers of his daughter Alice, as she plied the distaff, and thinking that, perhaps, but for his dream of alchemy, those slender fingers might have been making sweet melody on the lute, a young man, meanly clad, but whose ample cowl showed him to be an ecclesiastic, knocked at the door, and, after the customary "*Pax vobiscum*," entreated shelter for the night.

"Alas! good sir priest, I have little to offer you," said Gervase Forrester, "for it hath not yet pleased Heaven to vouchsafe success to my labors."

"Nor hath Heaven yet granted success to mine," returned the stranger, "although I studied three years under the famous Dr. Norton of St. Within's Priory—but I have a letter to brother Austin, of the convent of Westminster, whither I am now bound, from whom, if Heaven vouchsafe, I may derive much wondrous knowledge."

"Then, come in my brother," cried the guileless alchemist, "though I would that I had better fare to offer ye; but the best that I have is at your service, for all students in holy alchemy should indeed live together as brethren."

To this doctrine the young priest, as it may be supposed, most heartily assented; he entered the ill-furnished room, placed himself on the rude settle, and, ere half an hour had fled, Gervase Forrester and he were in the deepest discussion of the "Ordinalle of Alchemye," Dr. Norton's most celebrated work, and endeavoring to decipher the hidden meaning of that strange farrago of nonsense, "the huntynge of the Lyon Grene," which the reader may see, (and, if he chooses endeavor to understand,) in Elias Ashmole's curious "Theatricum Chemicum."

"Blessed be the saints who have sent this learned adept hither!" said Gervase Forrester, as he drew out the last flask of Malvoisie from its mouldy recess, and called his daughter to bring him the silver standing cup, the only remaining witness of his former superior station, "and blessed be heaven for the instruction he hath given me! Aye, ere long the meanest part of the work will be completed, and we will go back to Edmondton and re-purchase the estate, and Simon Cutterel shall have no reason to say that his son shall never marry the daughter of a beggarly gold maker."

There was that in this delighted speech that caused poor Alice both a blush and a smile; but the smile was a mournful one, for she remembered how many a time Gervase Forrester's hopes had been raised to the highest, only to be cast down as low on the morro .

Midnight arrived ere the adepts separated; and with the earliest dawn our poor alchemist arose and sought his daughter, to acquaint her with the joyful news that the young priest, in gratitude for his kind entertainment, had actually offered to take him to Westminster, and introduce him to the learned brother Austin. It was in vain that poor Alice gave utterance to her fears; it was in vain that she urged upon the blinded alchemist the importance of knowing somewhat more of his companion ere he set out with him: for the keener observation of the daughter had already detected a lurking smile about the lips of the young priest, while her father, with all his heart and soul, had been expatiating on the high mysteries of his golden dream. All was vain; and, earnestly beseeching his daughter to look well to the "beechen fire," which had burned unceasingly for almost six years,* with spirits as unsubdued, and with hopes as high, as when, thirty years before, he first watched the crucible, Gervase Forrester set out on his eventful journey with his young companion.

Pleasantly did the two disciples of alchemy beguile the way with learned converse; and, when the distant towers of Westminster at length rose to view, as they stood on the road leading to Tyburn, Gervase Forrester again returned thanks to Heaven for having directed the footsteps of the young priest to his door.

"Alas! I dare not enter yonder holy enclosure," said the young priest, with well dissembled sorrow; "would that I might! but bitter enemies, who envy my poor skill, dwell there, and my life, perchance, might be the forfeit."

"St. Mary forfend!" cried his guileless companion; "but, said you not that one brother Austin dwelt there?"

'He doth,' replied the young priest, 'and I have a letter addressed by brother Cyril, of St. Alban's Abbey, which I fain would convey to him. Go you, therefore, to the postern-gate, inquire of the porter for brother Austin, and say, when he comes, 'Good news for Lammas-tide,' to which, if he reply, 'Better news at Martinmas,' give him the letter, and wait his answer. Alas! that students in this holy science should be enforced to use signs and countersigns to protect them from ill!'

'I will do your bidding right warily,' said the unsuspecting alchemist; 'for well do I know the envy and hatred which oftimes subsist among those who should be fellow-workers with each other.' And, taking the letter, he set forward on his mission, gazing with intensest feelings of delight upon that noble abbey, where, for centuries, as tradition related, the black-robed brethren had pursued their fruitless but witching study, and where, even now, many an adept dwelt, encouraged in his toilsome inquiries by the smiles of their abbot Islip. He soon reached the gate, inquired for brother Austin, and when the monk who answered to that name appeared and gave the countersign, he placed the letter in his hand, and eagerly awaited a reply. The monk carefully opened the letter. 'It is well,' said he, 'come to-morrow;' and immediately withdrew.

With less buoyant step did the poor alchemist return to the spot where he had left his companion, and relate to him what had passed.

'We must wait until to-morrow,' said the young priest; 'nor will your waiting be in vain; but happy are you who can go hither and thither without fear or danger: for myself, scarce any place is safe. The Abbey of Westminster I dare not enter, lest false brethren should seek my life; nor in London itself am I more secure, for within its walls dwells even a deadlier enemy, who, because of the love Dr. Norton bore towards me, hath for ten years incessantly sought to slay me.'

Very plausible did this story appear to poor Gervase Forrester, for the records of science, during the middle ages, furnished similar instances of bitter rivalship; he therefore, without a question, followed his companion to a mean lodging near St. Giles's hospital, and on the following morning again set forth to Westminster.

Again brother Austin appeared at his summons, again he bade the poor alchemist defer his hopes until the morrow, and again the young priest soothed his vexation by promising discoveries well worth the waiting for. But to-morrow and to-morrow came and passed away, and still saw the patient alchemist bending his daily footsteps to Westminster, and returning each day, more cast down. 'Good sir priest,' said he, at length, 'wherefore do ye thus deceive me? Did I not quit my home at your bidding, and my beechen fire, and my precious liquid, even when it was showing signs of approaching transmutation? And yet brother Austin hath never once spoken.'

'Nay, blame me not, brother,' replied the wily priest, 'we must wait and be patient. Did not Raymond Lully watch the crucible even five times seven years ere he discovered the grand magistery?—and did not King Alfonso the wise send seven embassies to the Arabian sage, ere he condescended to come?'

Satisfied with two such unanswerable examples, and well trained by his thirty years' unsuccessful toil to habits of patient waiting, Gervase Forrester for the eighth time proceeded to the Abbey of Westminster, and found his spirits cheered, and his hopes revived, when the still silent brother Austin placed a carefully sealed letter in his hand. 'My waiting hath not been in vain,' said he as he joyfully placed, in turn, the letter in the young priest's hand, and then stood breathless with eager anticipation of some wondrous direction, some unintelligible character of high import, which that letter would certainly disclose. But again was he doomed to disappointment.

'My brother,' said the priest, 'there is nought in this letter, save an earnest request that I would endeavour to meet my learned brother Austin; this I dare not do; but do you again go, and I doubt not but he will at length break his long silence.'

'Alas! sir priest, you have in truth ill-treated me,' said the at length distrusting alchemist. 'My fire ere now hath gone out, the liquid ceased boiling, and I may have another seven years' labor to begin anew.'

Little did the young priest heed these reproaches; he seemed engaged in some close and busy occupation, and his thoughts were dwelling on far other things than the delusive visions of alchemy. Early on the morrow's morning, he summoned poor Gervase Forrester, put into his hands another sealed pacquet, and again requested him to proceed to Westminster, assuring him that this should indeed be his last errand. Away our poor Alchemist went, for the last time; again he presented himself at the postern-gate, and again he waited in the inner cloister until brother Austin should come. The usual door opened, but, instead of brother Austin, several men-at-arms seized him, took from him the pacquet, and rudely dragged him across the inner court to the presence chamber of the abbot. 'For what am I brought hither?' said he, turning a bewildered look on the bystanders.

'Not for gold-making, my good master,' said one of the men, 'though your guerdon, methinks, will be greater.'

'This is a fearful business,' said the abbot, eyeing the prisoner sternly, 'and surely you cannot be ignorant that the papers you have brought are what no good man would seek to meddle with; your only chance, therefore, is to confess all.'

'Holy father,' cried Gervase Forrester, 'what can I confess? I left my home with a young priest, who promised that I should learn much from one brother Austin, a profound student in 'holy alchemy.' '

'Brother Austin was no student in that art,' replied the abbot; 'would that his pursuits had been as innocent.'

'Holy saints!' cried the astonished alchemist, 'have I then left my house and my beechen fire in vain? Are all my hopes of thirty years, just when about to be realized, again to be blighted?'

The abbot cast a pitying look on the earnest enthusiast, for Simon Islip himself was a student in that visionary art. 'Alas, poor man!' said he, 'you have been the dupe of a deeply laid plot That learned young priest who employed you, is, I fear me, a prime mover in all these disturbances, and brother Austin hath been receiving from him intelligence which he hath in his turn given to the confederate nobles. But last evening was his fraud discovered, and he hath been sent for examination to the king, at Baynard's Castle, whither you also must go, and God grant you a safe deliverance!'

Too overwhelmed to reply, even fully to comprehend the words addressed to him, Gervase Forrester stood motionless while the men-at-arms placed fetters on his feet and bound his hands. 'Poor man!' said Abbot Islip to an attendant monk, 'he hath been but an unwilling instrument in the hands of those wicked traitors; follow him, therefore, to Baynard's Castle, and see what may be done.'

Surrounded by a gaping crowd, poor Gervase Forrester was hurried down to the river's side, placed in a boat, and, ere long, the lordly towers of Baynard's Castle appeared in view, where the broad royal banner, floating above the standard of the city, which displayed its tutelar St. Paul, showed that the monarch himself held court there. He was lifted from the boat, led swiftly across the court-yard, and, after passing through apartments filled with warlike stores and men-at-arms, among whom were mingled the yeomen of the guard, in the Tudor livery of white and green, he was conducted into the council chamber of Henry the Seventh, and found, almost ere he was aware, those small, keen, searching, basilisk eyes fixed intently upon him. But the poor alchemist did not quail beneath their glance, nor did his voice falter when questioned and cross questioned by one of the keenest and most suspicious of all the monarchs of Europe. Conscious of his innocence, he felt no hesitation in declaring all he knew; while, almost broken hearted at the deception practised upon his too easy faith, he scarcely heeded what farther trouble might bring to him.

'He answers well, and plausibly enow,' said Tudor, turning to the lords of the council, 'and yet can we believe that an aged man would be the dupe of a mere stranger, and go so far and do so much for a vain golden dream?'

'A *golden* dream hath power to lead men far, my liege, said Lord Stanley.'

'Ay, of visible, tangible, gold,' replied Tudor, with his cold, supercilious smile; 'but now I bethink me, these gold makers seldom keep choice company,—in the petition for the suppression of the sanctuary of St. Martin's, the alchemists are placed among the coiners, counterfeiters, and makers of false gold chains—a rascaille company.'

'Heaven forbid!' ejaculated the sincere enthusiast, 'for how can the mysteries of holy alchemy be vouchsafed to such? Was it not taught to Adam, in Paradise, and to Moses, and to divers holy saints?' and is it not, by reason of the great devotion and pure heartedness with which it should be pursued, called also the 'art angelical?' '

'The 'art angelical,' then, hath been the means of sending you to the Tower,' said Tudor, sternly, 'what say you to this?'

The danger in which he stood now flashed upon the mind of the poor alchemist. 'It is God's will,' said he, 'that same will which hath denied that great secret to my toils of thirty years—it is His will!' and he bent his head.

'Take him away,' said Tudor. 'Keep him in close custody, until our pleasure be further known.'

'Be not cast down, my son,' said the monk, who, at the request of Abbot Islip, had followed him from Westminster; 'believe only that *that* Will can never be wrong, and all shall indeed be well.'

Without the great gateway of Baynard's Castle a large crowd were pressing round; none dared cross the threshold, for not merely men-at-arms, well furnished with weapons, drawn up in double line below, and crossbow men, with quarrel ready placed, and crossbow wound up, ready to shoot above, but on each side of the gate were placed two small falcons, (brass cannon of a very rude construction,) the mere sight of which would have been sufficient to have overpowered a much larger multitude—for Tudor well knew how slight was his hereditary claim to the crown and how little he dwelt in the affections of the people. But, unawed by this display of warlike preparation, probably almost unconscious of it, a young woman, plainly attired, whose graceful bearing and the gold clasp which fastened the well worn girdle, proved that she had once occupied a higher station, pressed forward, anxious to catch a glimpse of the prisoner, who, popular gossip had told her, was a gold-maker, although it could not discover his name. Too soon were her worst fears realized—for in the unhappy prisoner, rudely dragged along by a company of men-at-arms, Alice Forrester recognized her father.

A mournful meeting was this between father and daughter; each had little consolation to give the other, and both had little hope for the future. Still, anxious, if possible, to afford a gleam of consolation to the heart-broken alchemist, Alice whispered that the 'beechen fire' still remained alight, and that the precious liquid had not ceased boiling. A faint smile passed over the countenance of the adept at this intelligence; he thanked his daughter, and he thanked Heaven. 'Farewell, Alice,' said he; 'who knows but I may return again.'

'As much hope of that as of his making gold,' said an old man beside her, as the poor alchemist was hurried away; 'few folks who see the inside of the Tower ever see the outside again.'

Overwhelmed with grief, Alice leant against the gateway, and her deep sorrow attracted the notice of a young man who had just before joined the crowd. 'And is that the poor alchemist's daughter?' said he—'alas! poor girl, I may well pity her.'

'Poor girl!' cried a countryman, 'and so would a heathen Saracen, for she was well born and bred, and a fairer young damsel ye might not see through a long summer's day than Alice Forrester.'

'Forrester!' cried the young man eagerly.

'Ay, my good sir, the daughter of Gervase Forrester, the alchemist of Edmonton.'

'Sweet lady!' gasped the young man, clasping his hands, 'my father!' He rushed to Alice, and seized her hand. 'Dear, dear Alice, be not cast down,' said he, 'your brother is returned to you; but what is this about my poor father, and how came he to be taken up? Speak, dear Alice.'

The astonished girl looked up bewildered, for the tall and dark complexioned young man of four-and-twenty bore little resemblance to the pale slight youth of sixteen, who, eight years before, had set forth from his father's dwelling to seek for gold beyond the seas. 'Speak, dear Alice,' said he, looking fondly in her face, for little change had passed over her features.

'Methinks yonder is one of the crew of gold finders,' said the old man, who still stood watching poor Alice, 'and you see he is pretending to be some relative, though the poor soul, we may well see, knows him not. Ay, a loving set are these alchemists; we are brothers, say they, and most brotherly are their doings. Now I should not marvel if that man yonder is one of those that the proclamation is out against.'

A stout heavy man, to whom these remarks were addressed, now started up. 'Ay, ay, Master Winslowe, ye're right—by my hilidome, 'tis the one that fifty marks are promised for.—ay, swart complexion, long

*Among the many fanciful methods by which alchemists sought to discover 'the great secret,' one of the most common at this period was by keeping a liquid composed of many ingredients constantly boiling for seven years. The almost impracticable nature of this receipt was probably the cause of its general adoption, because, from the great difficulty of proving its fallibility, each adept trusted that it would produce the desired effect, if the boiling could only be kept up the given time. For this purpose a fire of *beech wood* was used, a beechen fire being considered to supply a more equal degree of heat, and to require less constant attention, than a fire made of any other material.