POETRY.

THE STARS IN THE STREAM.

Between the steep and sunny hills
That all the dreamy vale enclose,
With many a bright and graceful curve
A clear and placid streamlet flows.
There soft, green banks slope gently down,
And groups of fragrant trees bend o'er,
Fresh blossoms nestle in the grass,
And shining pebbles gem the shore.

Here in the spiritual night,
When all the glorious earth was still,
As if the hand o God was spread
Above the deep woods of the hill,
A fair faced boy, with deep blue eyes,
And hair light sunight's wavy beam,
Would come and set for hours, and gaze
Upon the thick stars in the stream.

He wondered why the golden stars,
That hung so far amid the sky,
Should also in the wave below
In such a trance of beauty lie
And there for many a balmy night,
He lingered by the silver shore,—
So innocent with dear desires,
That questioned all things more and more.

A lonely, thoughtful boy was he,
In love with all things good and fair,
Great hopes and wishes filled his heart,
Before he hardly knew them there.
But still that heart grew bold and strong,
That love more broad and earnest grew,—
He saw the inner sense of things
And Nature's mystic meanings knew.

Long years had passed since he reposed
Upon the bank of that fair stream—
Long years of thought and holy toil
Had taught him life was not a dreem,
The same stars in the placid wave
Were still the same soft crowns of light,
And all along the banks, flowed down
To his great heart the same delight.

He wondered not now they were there,
So sweetly, tremulously bright,
Nor why star looked again to star
From waters to the fields of light;
For he had learned that love's own law
Is to restore what it receives,
That each kind look and tender word,
Its image in the bosom leaves.

He wandered not that at his feet
The space-born orbs so brightly shone,
He knew the heart when turned to Heaven
May make its starry joys its own;
And that the more seriously pure
That heart shall keep through day and night,
The more divine shall glow within
The love-stars of celestial light.

N. Y. Evening Post.

THE SECRET VAULT.

A TALE OF VIENNA.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

CHAPTER II.

Continued.

The young man spoke earnestly, for he loved the gentle Celeste with a deep and pure affection, and that affection had grown more powerful still, since he had learned that it was returned. To loose her now seemed a shock too deep for endurance. He was the only son of a brave officer, who had lost his life in the emperor's service, and for that reason, at least, he was entitled to some consideration from his sovereign; but under the care of Wolfgang Mozat, he had made himself a master of the musical art, and more than once had the emperor, Joseph II., signified a desire to assist the deserving youth. These circumstances led him to hope that he might yet gain the object nearest his heart; but if the old baron meditated the match in question, there was but little ground for that hope.

Celeste gazed tearfully into her lover's face, and at length she murmured:

"O, I shall be miserable if I am forced to wed the count; and yet I see not how I can escape it. It is a fearful future for me, Lubin—fearful!"

As the young girl spoke, she dropped her head upon her lover's shoulder, and burst into tears. Lubin was more than ever touched by this grief, and imprinting a warm kiss upon her brow, he uttered:

"You shall not be sacrificed thus; I will see the emperor—"

He spoke no further, for at that moment the old baron stood within the apartmet.

"So, so," uttered de Sigefroi, between his clenched teeth, while he trembled with rage, "this is the manner of your instruction is it? A pretty tutor have I engaged for my daughter. She shall *not* be *sacrificed*, eh? There, sir, go—go! and dare not ever to set your foot in my house again. The door is open!"

Lubin Bleinkoff felt the angry words rising to his tongue, but, with a strong effort, he kept them back, and bending a look of earnest appeal upon Celeste—in which was shadowed forth a hopeful prayer—he turned towards the open door.

"Fravherr Sigefroi," said he, as he hesitated a moment ere he reached the threshold, "is it my fault that I have loved your daughter?"

"*You* love my daughter?" iterated the baron, in a tone of utter contempt. "Don't urge me to strike you. Leave the house at once."

Lubin hesitated a moment, but that was all. On the next he had quitted the apartment; and as soon as he was gone, the de Sigefroi turned to his daughter.

"Celeste," he said, as the door closed behind the retiring youth, "are you prepared to tell your father the truth?"

The weeping girl looked for a moment up into her father's face, but she saw no spark of sympathy there, and folding up the wings of half-fledged hope that had almost fluttered in her bosom, she calmly replied:

"I never told my father a lie."

"And never deceived him?"

"No," answered the fair being, while all expression of conscious rectitude added a new charm to her features.

"Then tell me—do you love this music teacher of yours."

"But he is not—"

"Do you love young Bleinkoff?" sternly interrupted the old baron, while he bent a threatening look upon his daughter.

"He is a good and virtuous, father, and is already in favor with the emperor" said Celeste, as she held up her hands imploringly towards her iron-hearted parent.

"Do you love him?" thundered the old man, while his brows knit darker and more threateningly.

"I do," murmured the noble girl; and as she spoke, she settled back upon her seat, and buried her face in her hands.

For a full minute the old man paced up and down the apartment, almost struck dumb by the passion that raged within him; then stopping in front of the seat which she occupied, he said or rather gasped, for passion still overcame his free utterence:

"Look ye, Celeste, you will never see this young plebeian more. Now, you may either marry the Count de Gudius, or you may enter the convent. One of the two you must do."

"Then I will enter the convent, father," meekly, but yet firmly returned the young girl.

"No!" exclaimed the baron, still more exasperated; "you will marry the count—and that, too, within the month."

As Sigefroi spoke, he shook his long, bony finger most menacingly at his child, and then left the apartment. For some time after he was gone, Celeste sat like one bewildered; then rousing herself from her stupor, she sprang from her seat, and for several moments she stood in deep thought. Hope came across her path, but it flitted quickly away—then came fear, but though that stopped longer than did hope, still it found no resting-place in her bosom; at length the pride that belonged to her race settled down upon her soul, and nestled snugly in its home. Celeste de Sigefroi might have been moved by the least breath of a parent's affection, but the iron heel of tyranny only steeled her heart to a purpose as firm as was that of her father's.

CHAPTER III.

A week passed away after the unexpected meeting between the Baron de Sigefroi and Lubin Bleinkoff, when, one morning, as the former was sitting alone in his study, he was aroused from his reflections by the entrance of an old monk.

"Is this the Baron de Sigefroi?" asked the monk, as he stopped midway in the apartment.

"Uncover thy head when thou speakest to me," exclaimed the baron, considerably angered at the bold assurance of his visiter.

"The holy father of St. Francis uncovers not his head in the imperial palace, and thou mayest rest assured that he will not do it before thee."

As the monk spoke, he looked sternly upon the man before him, and the proud baron quailed beneath that glance. He was not in a fit state to meet the representative of his church; but forcing back the anger which even *he* dared not offer to the holy father, he said;

"I *am* the Baron de Sigefroi; now the sooner your business is done, the better shall I be satisfied."

"One moment will suffice," returned the monk. "The emperor would see you at the imperial palace immediately."

"And wherefore?"

"He will tell thee himself."

As the monk returned this laconic answer, he turned and left the apartment. For several moments the baron stood by his table, buried in deep thought. First, there was something in the bearing and tone of the man who had just left him that made him feel uneasy—why it was he could not tell, but still an undefinable sensation of dread crept over him, as the tones of his visiter rang in his ears. Then what could the emperor want of him at such a time? and why send a monk after him? But the mandate must be obeyed; and in a short time he started for the imperial palace.

Joseph II. sat within one of the smaller drawing-rooms of the palace, and when the baron was ushered into his presence, a deep, dark frown rested upon his brow; but as he addressed his subject that frown passed away, though his countenance was still stern.

"Fravherr Sigefroi," said the emperor, as the old man bent low before him, "we have sent for thee touching a matter of some importance—no more nor less than the happiness of two of our faithful subjects."

"What is your will sire?" asked the baron, with a gesture of impatience.

"First, that you contract no marriage bonds between the Count de Gudius and your daughter; and secondly, that you will give the lady's hand to him who already possesses her heart—young Lubin Bleinkoff."

"And does your majesty *command* this?" asked Sigefroi, with a show of resentment which he could not conceal.

"O, no," returned Joseph. "I do not command it—merely ask it as a matter of justice to the parties concerned. Bleinkoff is already carving out for himself a fortune, and he will be no mean match for your daughter. He is under our royal patronage, and if you consent to the union, you shall not regret it."

The baron knew enough of Joseph's benevolent disposition to be aware that an expressed wish on such a subject as that amounted to a command; and he also knew that if he had taken the idea into his head, he would eventually see it carried out, and after a moment's thought, he asked:

"Will your majesty grant me a few days, in which to think of this matter?"

"Certainly," replied the emperor, "certainly; and I trust that you will see that your happiness depends greatly upon the happiness of those around you. Our throne would be a sorry place were it not upheld by the love and esteem of our virtuous subjects, and you well know that a benevolent heart alone can win that prize. We shall expect thy answer anon."

As the baron left the reception room, there was a wicked expression upon his features, and one who knew him might easily have told that some evil design dwelt within his bosom. As he walked forth into the open air, he mumbled and muttered to himself, until at length, just as he stepped upon his own pavement, the troubled expression passed away, and one of fierce determination took its place.

All day he remained within his own dwelling, and at night he sent one of his trusty servants in quest of Lubin Bleinkoff. The youth was easily found; and as he entered the baron's private room, he was somewhat surprised at the cordial manner in which he was welcomed.

"A week since," said Sigefroi, as he motioned Lubin to a seat, "we parted somewhat in anger, but at the present time I have somewhat relented from my purpose. I have no desire to make my daughter miserable, and if I thought you would cherish her as her virtue and goodness deserve, I might consent to your union."

"Cherish her!" exclaimed the almost enraptured youth, as he started from his seat. "O, sir, if you would but give me her hand, I would willingly lay down my life if 'twere needed to secure her happiness."

"I ask no such sacrifice as that," returned the baron, while a sort of half-smothered expression of contempt passed over his features.—"You had better hold on to your life as long as possible."

"So I will; but yet it shall be devoted to the happiness of your child; and if you but give your consent to our union, I know that she will join with me in blessing you."

"There is one condition, however," said the baron, in a business kind of manner, without seeming to notice the fervent expression of his young companion, "on which I will give my consent to your union."

"Name it; and if it conflict not with my honor, I will abide by it."

"I have an estate in Ostend," said the old man, "and there is much that needs attention about it. Now I wish to entrust the business to some one who can feel interested in its settlement, and if you will depart at once for that city, and perform the duties faithfully, you shall not only have my daughter's hand, but that whole estate shall be made over to her as a dowry. Will you undertake the task?"

"Willingly,—most willingly," quickly answered the young man. "I have friends in Ostend, and they will readily assist me."

"I wish to see the papers at once" remarked Sigefroi, as he arose from his seat and took the lamp in his hand.

As he spoke, he passed out from the room, but in a few moments he returned to relight his lamp which had accidentally been extinguished, and as he pricked up the wick, he said to Lubin:

"The papers are below, in my private vault and if you will accompany me, to hold the light while I open the safe, you will accommodate me much."

"Certainly," answered the youth, as he started up from his seat, and prepared to follow the baron.

Lubin knew not that an old man of such standing in the empire could harbor evil against one like himself, and with a comparatively joyous tread he started forth after his guide. At the end of a short but circuitous route, they descended a long flight of stone steps, and in a minute more they descended another, which entered upon the paving of a long, low, arched passage. On walked the baron, and, all unconscious of danger, on followed Lubin.

Lubin took one step, but that was all. The wide stone slab upon which he stood gave way beneath his weight, and with a sharp, quick cry of anguish, he fell through. He caught at the sides of the aperture as he sank, but it offered him no support, for they were too far apart, and his hands slipped from the stones! He had gone to seek the poor mason, Roland Eppendorf!

"There, master Bleinkoff," uttered the hard hearted old villain to himself, as he swung the slab into its place, "you will trouble me no more, and I doubt me much if the tender-hearted emperor will ever find out your last resting place. *You* marry my daughter, indeed! I would not have taken thy life hadst thou not prated to the emperor, and thus made thyself dangerous to my plans."

When the baron reached his room he could not but feel somewhat troubled at what he had done, for Joseph would most assuredly use every exertion to hunt up his young favorite, and suspicion might fall upon himself. But the secret vault was too nicely contrived for detection, and the only men who could betray him had been consigned to its dismal depths; hence he took courage, and tried to feel satisfied with his work.

CHAPTER IV.

Three successive days did Wolfgang Mozart attend at court without his youthful companion, and the emperor began to fear that some foul play had been used against him. Inquiry was made in all parts of the city, the guards at the gates were all questioned, but no tidings could be obtained of the missing man. Joseph sent for the Baron de Sigefroi, and questioned him sharply, and at the same time a large party of police were sent to examine his house, but all to no purpose.

When the baron returned to his dwelling, he called for his daughter, and as she entered his presence, her eyes were red and swollen, her hair dishevelled, and she was weeping bitterly.

"What ails thee, child?" asked the old man, as he looked up at the grief-stricken girl.

Celeste gazed through her tears for a moment, but her grief was too deep for utterance, and sinking into a chair, her flood of sorrow burst forth afresh.

"Are you weeping for Lubin Bleinkoff?" continued the baron, while a flush of anger passed over his features.

"And why should I not weep for one like him?"

"And why should you?"

Celeste made no reply to the taunting question, and her father arose nervously from his seat and approached her.

"Look ye, child," he said, "you may weep, or laugh, as best suits you, but ere another week rolls by, you shall be the wife of de Gudius."

The fair girl started up and threw the long hair back from her pale face. Her eyes stopped their flowing, and where but a moment before had dwelt the leaden hue of exhaustion, now flashed a keen fire,—her bosom heaved with the firm purpose that dwelt within, and she uttered the simple word—

"Never!"

"I have sworn it," exclaimed the baron, not a little startled by the fearful energy with which his child had spoken.

"Then here,—before Great God, I swear I will never do it."

Celeste fell upon her knees as she spoke, and clasped her hands above her head. Her father gazed upon her as she knelt thus, and for a moment a peculiar feeling of paternal pride took possession of his soul, but it was quickly swept swept away; and seizing her by the arm, he rased her to her feet and bade her seek her room, adding as he did so:

"Remember my oath, for it shall be fulfilled."

"Not while Austria contains room for my grave," uttered Celeste, as she closed the door of her father's room behind her.

To be Continued.

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
B. Liberia Herald

February 1842(XI,4)--February 18,1857(n.s. VII,4)

1852

NEW SERIES NO 2