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Full-Blood AYRSHIRE, DUTCH,
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Of Choice Strains.
NORWAY, ME.
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Poetry.

Portent.

BY CELIA THAXTER.

When the darkness drew away, at the dawning of the day

I heard the madrales screaming loud and shrill

across the bay;

And I wondered to behold all the sky in ruddy gold.

Flashing fire and flame where the clouds like billows rolled.

Red the sea ran east and west, burning broke each tumbling crest.

Where the waves, like shattered rubies, leaped and fell and could not rest;

Every rock was carmine-fused, every sail like roses blushed.

Flying swift before the wind from the south that roared and rushed.

Is it Judgment-day? I said, gazing out o'er billows red—

Gauging at crimson vapors, crowding, drifting overhead.

Listening to the great uproar of the waters on the shore.

To the wild and wailing sea-birds, buffeted and beaten sore.

Is the end of Time at hand? Is this portent, strange and grand.

A portent of destruction blazing there o'er sea and land?

Then the scarlet ebbed, and slow sky above and earth below

Drowned in melancholy purple, seemed with grief to overflow.

And while thus I gazed, the day, growing stronger turned to gray;

All the transitory splendor and the beauty passed away;

And I recognized the sign of the color poured like wine

In the morn of late October as from clusters of the vine.

'Twas the ripeness of the year; soon I know must disappear

All the warmth and light and happiness that made the time so dear;

And again our souls must wait while the bare earth desolates.

Bore in patience and in silence all the winter's wrath and hate.

—Harper's Magazine.

Miscellany.

[For the OXFORD DEMOCRAT.]

"The Out Meal Crusaders" on a Tramp.

No. 1.

Walking Among the White Hills. The First Night in Camp. How the Party Prepared, and How They Fared. Cold Tees. The Fun of the Thing.

No. 1.

Mr. Editor:—Has it ever occurred to you that the best way of seeing and enjoying the mountains is not in whizzing through them on railroad trains, or in being tumbled through, packed like herring in Concord coaches? Having tried all the different modes of travel; rail, stage, private conveyance and "roughing it" in the pedestrian's truly independent way—we say, give us a jolly, brave and wide-awake company of tramps, ignoring all ordinary ills, snapping their fingers in the face of frost and storm, and hearty believers in the doctrine of annihilation for all grumblers. The risk of life and limb by this mode of travel is certainly far less than by rail or stage. We have no apprehension of collision of trains or cars jumping the track, and there are no fears of breaking of breeching or giving way of brakes. The measure of our responsibility is full when we keep from the track while engines and stages are passing; hold, with a firm grip, to our alpen-stocks and guard well our drinking cups dangling at our side. A word, just here, in regard to the name of our party, which was extemporized early one morning while the oat meal was being passed round to the most ravenous crowd. Should the first part of the name seem lacking in poetry, be assured it was suggestive of a pleasure not to be measured even by "the old gentleman's" big handled basin, which the manifold offices of drinking and coffee-cup, mush bowl, washing and shaving dish. One meaning given by Webster to "Crusader" is "a hot-headed, fanatical person." This definition of the term applies, of course, only to those persons whose zeal gave out before they started, and to those who where chilled and turned back by the first mountain zephyr. Our party numbered twenty-two, nine ladies and thirteen gentlemen; representing the East, the West and the Middle States. Among them were three clergymen, nine college graduates (one of Oxford University, known as "The Irish Veiled Prophet" who will be heard from at the end of this account in a poetical addendum), and nine teachers, three of the latter having been at the head of Fryburg Academy.

The make-up of the party was superior in all respects. Would we could introduce each one personally to your acquaintance. The musical element prevailed to a great extent, contributing in no small degree to the entertainment of all. In fact, we were often called upon for entertainments of this kind, both vocal and instrumental, which were as often given at the roadside, in camp, or at hotels where we chanced to call.

PRELIMINARY PLANS AND PREPARATIONS.

Not a slight task was it for us to make preparations for this tour. In way of tents, commissariat, walking suits, and touches that should refresh dusty pilgrims, take the kinks out of twisted backs and prove an elixir to rheumatic and kindred pains. Several preliminary meetings were held to arrange our plans, to appoint committees for the different bureaus of labor, and to ascertain, definitely the size of the party. A committee of three (who in this story

shall be known as "The Directory") was appointed previous to our departure, who were to settle the time and line of march or any other question that might arise, where there might in so large a party be quite naturally a difference of opinion. For what reason we know not, unless it was respect for our years, and remembering the old adage, "Old men for counsel"—or it might have been for the supposed information we had gained by previous three weeks' ramble among the mountains—we were appointed on said committee. This committee proved strong in every emergency, for the reason that they were a unit, and so the decisions of "The Directory" were readily acquiesced in by every member.

Some were quite brave and enthusiastic at first, but failed to "keep their courage up to the sticking place," and deserted at the last pinch; while another who joined us at the last hour before starting, with lofty head and aspiring air, literally panting for the mountain air, alas, on the first night, "fell upon stony ground," and in consequence of the frosts and chilly night air fell by the way and early on the following morning was seen covertly retreating and singing to himself in an undertone, that plaintive and familiar air, "Sweet Home."

At 3:20 P. M., July 30th, "The Out Meal Crusaders" gathered at Fryburg Station, Portland and Ogdensburg Railroad. A large number of friends assembled with them to say good-by to the mountaineers. Now the train rolls in, and the score or more of us rush for our pile of boxes, half barrels, tin ware, oat meal and bundles; and each one for his meal-bag filled with rubber and army blankets and other knickknacks of personal comfort, for which a previous ramble had shown the necessity. We well remember that on that trip we had no towel and after our morning ablutions were obliged to take our handkerchief or seize some fragment of a newspaper and rub it over our face, or in the absence of that, to hang oneself upon the fence to dry. We also remember how we missed a mirror, that indispensable article to arrange a gentleman's toilet. In its stead we were obliged to gaze into the placid stream and see, daily, how we were taking on color flesh and beauty. We leave the station amid good-bys, waving of hands and handkerchiefs, and cheer upon cheer from those departing and those left behind. In less than an hour we have passed through North Conway and arrived at Glen Station, where our walk begins, and where we meet our team (which had left us in the morning) ready to receive the impediments of twenty-two sojourners among the mountains. As the boxes, bales and bags are spread upon the platform, our driver stands aghast and expresses many doubts whether his horse is equal to the task before him. "Load enough for two elephants!" cries a bystander. Another wants to know if any of our party are members of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. We each seize a box, a tent, or anything that will fit into a vacant crevice; thus trying to compress our huge load so as not to be obliged to leave half of it behind. We here make a discovery that casts a shadow over the whole party—the loss of a nice basket of fried turnovers. We subsequently learned they were left in the care of the editorial member of the party, and that, in consequence of reportorial responsibilities and other causes, they were by him forgotten and left at the home station. But we have decided this was mere ruse on his part, and that this tempting lunch was purposely left as a relay for him on his early homeward march.

THE START—APOST—WATER WONDERS.

One of our Western girls, on the eve of our departure, meets with an accident in the way of a sprained ankle, and at Pa's express orders "must not walk this afternoon." We chartered a private carriage and despatch her in pursuit of the stage, which, in our oversight and hurry in packing, his got a ten minute start of us. Now we are packed and ready to start in the direction of the Glen House. Our horse starts off bravely, bearing the huge load over the hills promising muscle equal to this mountain emergency. We who are of "The Directory" feel a responsibility for the precious freight of humanity committed to our trust, and, resolved to restore them to home and friends in even better condition than we find them, we decide to take only a short ramble on our first afternoon. The day is beautiful, the air clear and exhilarating, and everything auspicious for a prosperous trip. We stroll along leisurely, extending our coil nearly one-fourth of a mile on the winding way. We sit down on a pleasant seat and sing a duet with a lovely woman, when in the midst of our sweet song a practical girl, uncharmed by our music, cries out, "Mr. L., have you got any pickles?" Which question led us to infer that our song had "soured" on her. Our first sight of water, its fall and its cunning effect upon the solid granite we behold at Goodrich's Falls, on the Ellis river. So pleased were many of the party with this beginning of "water wonders," that they were loath to start again, apparently forgetting that night was approaching a suitable place for camping to be found, and tents to be pitched; not to mention the new experience of arranging our nightly quarters, and preparing supper in camp.

A few rods beyond Jackson Falls we see a new-mown hayfield, which strongly invites us to make this our first tenting-ground, giving us, as it does, a fine view of Mount Washington and a grand belt of surrounding hills. We despatch a man to obtain consent of the proprietor, but he objects, and informs us that there is a pasture a few rods in advance where we may "camp in well-come." We advance upon the pasture, meanwhile picking up sticks for the fire, literally loading ourselves down with said committee. This committee proved strong in every emergency, for the reason that they were a unit, and so the decisions of "The Directory" were readily acquiesced in by every member.

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