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The Oxford Democrat

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GEO. H. WATKINS,
Editor and Proprietor.

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June 19, 76.

A. T. WADSWORTH, M.D.,

PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON,

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Poetry.

The Mirror.

BY WALTER LARNED.

I would my lady's mirror be,
So might I hold her image fair,
And perchance she'd smile on me,
Seeing her face reflected there.

I never could her mirror be,
For when she smiled on me, ah, then
My heart would hold the image sweet
And never give it back again.

—Scribner.

An Incident of Battle Versified by Bret Hart.

Bunny, lying in the grass,
Saw the shining columns pass,
Saw the starry banner fly,
Saw the chargers fret and fume,
Saw the flapping hat and plume;
Most unexpectant eye.

Thinking only in the dew,
That it was a fine review,
Till a flash, not all of steel,
Where the rolling caisson's wheel
Brought a rumble and a roar
Rolling down that velvet floor,
And like blows of autumn hail,
Sharply thrashed the iron hail.

Bunny, thrilled by unknown fears,
Raised his soft and pointed ears,
Mumbled his orchard lip,
Quivered his pulsating hip,
As the sharp vindictive yell
Rose above the screaming shell;
Thought the world and all its men,
All the charging squadrons meant,
All were rabbit-hunters then,
All to capture him intent.

Bunny was not much to blame;
Wiser folks have thought the same,
Wiser folks, who think they spy
Every ill begins with "I."

Wildly panting here and there,
Bunny sought the freer air,
Till he hopped below the hill,
And saw, lying close and still,
Men with muskets in their hands,
(Never bunny understands
That hypocrisy of sleep,
In the vigils grim they keep,
As recumbent on that spot
They elude the lovely shot.)
One—a grave and quiet man,
Thinking of his wife and child
Far beyond the Rapidan,
Where the Androscoogin smiled—
Felt the little rabbit creep,
Nestling by his arm and side,
Wakened from strategic sleep,
To that soft appeal replied,
Drew him to his blackened breast,
And—

But you have guessed the rest,
Softly o'er that chosen pair,
Omnipotent Love and Care
Drew a mightier hand and arm
Shielding them from every harm;
Right and left the bullets waved,
Save the savior for the saved.

Who believes that equal grace
God extends in every place,
Little difference he scans
Twixt a rabbit's God and man's.

—Hayes's.

Selected Story.

THE NEW SOPRANO.

"Try that chair by the fire, S-e-v-e, and comfort your soles on the mantel while I unearth a pair of slippers for you. I've a small mound of them in the closet, built up of the individual gifts of 'grateful pupils.'"

"A cruel waste! You should be a centipede, Hal, instead of that torrid biped, a bachelor. By the way, speaking of single blessedness, how it must narrow you, my boy, to witness diurnally the bliss of the bride and bridegroom who sit opposite you here at table! Favor them with Lamb's 'Complaint against Married People,' will you? and send me the bill."

"Bride and bridegroom? Well, that is rich! Have a cigar, deluded youth, while I enlighten you concerning this mellifluous couple. Did you mark the gentleman particularly? You can't take him in at a glance; there's too much of him. Goodwin his name is—Timothy Goodwin; 'Good Timothy' his friends dub him; and the title applies."

He sat next me at the table when I first came to Mrs. Tewksbury's, five years ago, and from the onset he showed a fatherly interest in me—an interest which this quaking striping of an organist appreciated, I can assure you. Being one of the pillars of St. Luke's—the church I play at, you remember—an and esteemed musical critic withal, his hearty approval of me as a performer was an immense advantage to me.

You'd hardly suppose such a quiet, imperturbable little earthling as he looks to be would rhapsodize over music, would you? It was a surprise to me to find how deeply it moved him. He soon fell into the habit of dropping into my room after tea when he heard me at the piano; and many a time I've caught the great, strong fellow mopping his eyes surreptitiously over affecting passages.

As I came to know him intimately, and to feel what a staunch, tender-hearted, domestic sort of individual he was, I began to wonder he had never married. One day I asked him in a joking way how a rich man like himself could reconcile it with his conscience to remain a bachelor in America, where there was such a preponderance of unmarried ladies to be supported? He made a wry face, and said he had assumed the maintenance of two spinster step-cousins; wasn't that his part?

"Or, if you think it isn't, Hal, I'll tell you what I'll do," he added, laughing. "You marry yourself, and I'll support your wife. Won't that be fair?"

"Hardly fair for the lady, I remarked, adding that I should play the luckless unknown who should thus fail to secure his as her Benedict."

The idea seemed to amuse him immensely.

"You kindly insinuate that it would be a benevolence in me to take a wife," said he with a twinkle in his eye. "Now, I protest I'm not conceited enough to think that. On the contrary, if a woman should consent to give herself to me, I should consider the benevolence entirely on her side. Can't say I crave such a charity just at present, though," he added in comic haste, stretching his long arms as if to waive the bequest. "The fact is, Hal, I've never seen the girl I want. Being hard upon forty, it stands to reason I never shall see her; I fear she died young. May I trouble you to play Beethoven's Funeral March in respect to her memory?"

And so the subject dropped.

Timothy was no woman-hater, you understand. Indeed, he admired the whole sex, but in a collective way, as you might admire the Galaxy without preferring any individual star. Young ladies were to him nebulous and mysterious creations, to be revered from a distance; he never lavished upon one of them a tithe of the attentions he lavished upon me. I had terrible headaches in those days, and I shall never forget how patiently he would sit making passes over my head till the pain yielded to his touch, as it was sure to do sooner or later. He had more magnetism than any other man I knew. Detesting a dress-coat and white kids as he detested the machinations of the Evil One, he seldom went into society, but he was all ready for lectures and concerts, marching off to the hall with me on his arm as proudly as if I had been the most bewitching damsel. Expecting on Saturday, when I was usually engaged at the choir rehearsal, we were rarely separated on an evening.

We had gone on in this David-and-Jonathan style perhaps a year, when Miss Sparrow came to St. Luke's as soprano singer. I remember her first appearance in our dim old gallery that last Sunday in Lent—how she seemed to brighten and glorify the place like a ray from heaven. And then her voice! It set you thinking of angels. Moreover, she had the complexion peculiar to that family, and the blue eyes and golden hair. For the life of me, I couldn't help twisting my neck to look at her, at the imminent risk of spoiling my accompaniment.

That noon Timothy electrified me by appearing in the organ-loft while it still echoed with the benediction, though heretofore he had invariably waited for me after service in the vestibule. I happened just then to be congratulating the new soprano on being in such capital voice that morning, and as the tenor stepped across to shake hands with Timothy, I went on talking with her till she left. When I turned the singers were gone, and there stood my poor David, frowning at a music-rest so savagely that I fancied he must be suffering from a bad headache, and expressed my sympathy.

"Headache? I haven't a headache," he growled, stalking down stairs in advance. I thought he needn't have felt so enraged if he hadn't, and walked on in dumb dignity. Presently he observed testily that when he honored me with a call in my citadel, it might be polite in me to introduce him to my friends.

I said I thought he knew the members of the choir—at least, but the new soprano.

"Well, she's somebody, I suppose."

"I beg your pardon, Timothy," I cried amazed. "It didn't occur to me you'd care to become acquainted with her. I didn't present you because I fancied you'd consider the introduction a bore."

"You're sure of that, Hal?" he asked with a sort of fierce eagerness. "You haven't any personal motive for not wishing to extend Miss Sparrow's circle of gentlemen friends?"

I burst out laughing at the absurdity of the idea. It was but a week, remember, since my introduction to the young lady.

Timothy drew a long breath, and straightaway spent it in questions concerning her:

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?

I told him all I knew. Her father lived on State street; her mother lived in heaven; sisters she had none, but of little brothers something less than a score, who dogged her steps as persistently as the bass follows the air. To escort her home from rehearsal was to lead the van of any infant squadron, a running accompaniment which the night before had disturbed my mental harmony.

For, though I did not feel it necessary to enlarge on this point to Timothy, I had conceived a prodigious fancy myself for the sweet little soprano, and should have been glad to learn more of her, and less of her fraternal blessings. I afterward discovered why she surrounded herself with these as with a garment. It was from pure compassion for her father. He was a nervous invalid, and the proximity of those boys distracted him. Of course it did. I could enter into the old gentleman's feelings perfectly. I distracted me too. Do not smile, my dear fellow. The prancing young ubiquities were well enough in their way, I'll admit; I only objected to having them in mine.

All that week my beloved Timothy seemed strangely preoccupied and erratic, capping the climax Saturday evening by fidgeting into my room in his

next day's clothes to announce in a shame-faced fashion that, by the way, he believed he'd look in with me that night at rehearsal if agreeable.

It was not agreeable; it was decidedly otherwise, for it upset a deep-laid scheme of mine. As Fate would have it, by means of sundry extra rehearsals for Easter I had made great progress in my acquaintance with Miss Sparrow during the last few days, and but for Timothy I should have called upon her that evening with the gift of a new ballad, and so, maybe, have had the pleasure of escorting her to St. Luke's, to the routing of the brotherkins.

Well, I could only toss the roll of music under the sofa as gently as masculine depravity would permit, and conduct my music-greedy friend to the choir-meeting, ostensibly to listen to the chants, though I knew, and he knew, that he had always heretofore objected to hearing them practised.

Of course I presented him in due form to Miss Sparrow when she arrived. He bowed like a worshipping devotee, and as she moved to her place by the contralto sat down with an exalted impression upon his hat, to the audible amusement of the youthful Sparrows, perched on the gallery steps. I glanced at him again during the first soprano solo, and saw him in the same position, his eyes fixed on the singer. Rehearsal over, he coolly walked up to her to proffer his escort. I verily believe she was too startled to decline it. She accepted his arm with a look of blank amazement, and the two set off together in the April slosh, followed by the inevitable juvenile guard. Judging from the bespattered condition of Timothy's overcoat that night, the younglings danced about him like frisky satyrs all the way; but he wore the face of one who has walked with angels far above this mud ball.

This indifference to his broadcloth struck me at the time as peculiar, for he has such a constitutional horror of dirt that he really keeps up his muscle by the use of clothes-brush; still, though I afterwards saw him spread his Sunday beaus with mustard and his Monday beaus with oil, it was not until late on the latter evening that I came to a just appreciation of his abnormal state. Without knocking he bolted into my room in great agitation.

"For the love of mercy, Hal, tell me what to do!" he cried, upsetting the pin-stool without perceiving it. "You're younger than I, and understand the nature of women better."

I did, did I? Well, I agreed with him on hearing his story.

He had just returned from Miss Sparrow's. The young lady hadn't invited him to call; she didn't receive calls now, in fact, on account of her father's rapidly increasing illness, though Timothy was not aware of this. I dare say she thought he had come at my request with the new anthem I had promised to send, and she ran down to the parlor at once, not even stopping to put down the vial of medicine she happened to have in her hand.

"Good evening, Mr. Goodwin," said she—nothing more nor less; and then she stood quietly awaiting his message, very pale and interesting, I've no doubt, from grief and watching.

I know Timothy's great warm heart swelled with compassion for the afflicted young thing, but even to express his sympathy he would not touch so much as the hem of her garment till she gave him the right, much less would take her hand.

"What I'm about to say, Miss Sparrow," he began, paucal—the room, and probably hurrying the words at her like pebbles from a sling. "I'm aware it isn't customary for a man to declare himself on so short an acquaintance, but I'm a plain, straightforward fellow, desperately in earnest."

Fancy the little soprano's wonderment! I seen now to see her "baby-blue" eyes opening each moment wider and wider. "Till now I have never met any woman whom I wished to marry," Timothy went on, "and I'm forty years old. When at middle age love comes for the first time to a man of my temperament, it is no milk-and-water sentiment, Miss Sparrow. I feel that I could give my life to make you happy. Will you be my wife?"

"You don't mean to say you charged upon the poor girl in that merciless way?" I broke in, cutting short his narrative.

He looked aggrieved and sorely puzzled. What had he done amiss? Hadn't he acted the part of a gentleman in avowing his feelings? Wasn't it more honorable to tell her his intentions frankly than to have been to steal her affections unawares?

"But how did Miss Sparrow take it?"

"That's what troubles me," said my wretched friend. "She didn't take it kindly; she seemed offended, and would have run away if I had not put my hand on the door-knob and begged her to hear me through. I assured her I would not press her for an immediate answer, but she only burst out crying, declaring I had no right to say such things to her; she would tell her father. As if I should object to his being told! Indeed, I should have spoken to him myself on the subject this morning had not Dr. Pillsbury said he was too ill to see strangers. I tried to make this plain to Miss Sparrow. I implored her to tell me how I had vexed her, but she broke away from me and rushed out of the room. I cannot under-

stand her conduct. I might have known such a bright young girl couldn't fancy an old fossil like me, but am I so bad a fellow, Hal, that she need feel insulted by my love? I would have walked barefooted over burning coals sooner than have wounded her as I have done." And so on, and so on, till the cock crow.

I ventured the second time to hint that he had been too precipitate in his wooing, but he shook his head incredulously, and finally went away as mystified as he came.

At our next meeting the little soprano asked me in a shy, conscious way if my friend were quite well. Had I ever fancied his brain affected? I might have answered with a simple negative. I shall always think a little better of myself, Steve, that then and there, in the full bewitchment of Miss Sparrow's presence, I had manliness enough to speak a good word for Timothy—to tell her that, spite of some eccentricities, he had the finest brain, as well as the warmest heart, of any man of my acquaintance.

I did not see her again for months, as she withdrew from the choir to devote herself exclusively to her father, whose sufferings were becoming daily more intense. These were not so much from actual pain, as from extreme nervousness that opiates failed to relieve. Dr. Pillsbury often spoke of the case—the doctor was boarding here then—and one day he appealed to Timothy to go with him and try his magnetic power upon the patient. A queer look came over Timothy's face, but he went at once, and was able to soothe the sick man simply by the laying on of hands. After this, while Mr. Sparrow lived, he went of en, and comforted him greatly in his last hours, not only by his magnetic influence, but indirectly as well by keeping those boys out of the way. The money he spent at that time in taking the laids to panoramas and menageries would have constituted him life member of a missionary society.

You can see the natural result. Having proved a blessed narcotic to the dying father, Timothy ceased to be irritable to the daughter. An irritant? Timothy couldn't irritate her, and she couldn't irritate Timothy. I've studied them curiously the three years of their married life, only to arrive at this conviction. And you took them for bride and groom? No wonder! since they still feast with unabated relish on conjugal sweets. Ah, well! such diet is not for me, my boy; I thrive upon sour grapes."—Penn Shirley, in Lippincott's.

LACONICS.

The surest remedy against scandal is to live to die.

Love those who advise, but not those who praise you.

One ungrateful man does an injury to all who are wretched.

Frogs bite young children as frosty nights bright young plants.

We may as well expect to grow stronger by constant eating as wiser by constant reading.

The sleep of memory is not its death; forgotten studies are certain aptitudes gone to sleep.

The vices of the rich and great are mistakes, errors, and those of the poor and lowly for crimes.

A good man will be doing good wherever he is. His trade is a compound of charity and justice.

It is better to sow a good heart with kindness than a field with corn, for the heart's harvest is perpetual.

The excesses of our youth are drafts upon our old age, payable with interest, about thirty years after date.

It is only through we are taught to reflect, and we gather the honey of worldly wisdom not from flowers, but thorns.

The current coin of life is plain sound sense. We drive a more substantial and thriving trade with that than gaudy ease.

The welfare of a nation rests upon the happiness which it enjoys within itself, and its independence of all control from without.

The moral courage that will face obloquy in a good cause is a much rarer gift than the bodily valor that will confront death in a bad one.

As the intellect wastes away, malignity generally increases. So, when the brain decays after death, snakes are said to breed in the vacant skull.

Vanity is our dearest weakness, in more things than a man will sacrifice everything, and starve out of his other inclinations, to keep alive that one.

The highest point outward things can bring us to is the contentment of the mind, with which no estate can be poor, without which all estates will be miserable.

More persons are particularly spiteful against those follies in others which they themselves have. They remind us of a monkey scratching and grinning at the mimic monkey in the glass.

Never seek to be entrusted with your friend's secret; for no matter how faithfully you may keep it, you will be liable in a thousand contingencies to the suspicion of having betrayed it.

We ought never to believe evil of anyone till we are certain of it. We ought not to say anything that is rude and displeasing even in joke; and even then we ought not to carry the joke too far.

A firm trust in the assistance of an Almighty Being naturally produces patience, hope, cheerfulness, and all other dispositions of mind that alleviate those calamities which we are not able to remove.

Nerves was a human machine produced without many trials and failures; whereas this universe, in all its sublime complication, was perfectly at its production, perfected in the ideas of its great Author, even from eternity.

HAPPINESS is much more equally divided than some of us imagine, and in this point of view has been compared to the mango in the Desert—"He that gathered had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack."

Turns is but the correspondence between things and our notions of them. To search after truth, to love it for its own sake, are, therefore, resolute into loving and striving for notions that conform perfectly to their prototypes. True ideas are actualities, but truth is nothing.

Religious and Secular Education.

The impossibility of excluding all religious teaching in common schools was forcibly stated by the Rev. Dr. Bagg in the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland: "It has been proposed that religious teaching be excluded from the common schools, and should be conducted in some other way. Now, no one that looked at that proposal but must see that, apart from all other considerations, it was quite impracticable. For no one had been able to say where secular instruction ended, and where religious instruction began. For example, how would it do in connection with Scotch history to omit religious instruction? How would it do to teach the history of Scotland without teaching about the Reformation, and all the events which had succeeded the Reformation? How was it possible for the teacher to say to the children, 'I will tell you about the history of Scotland as far as its secular matters are concerned, and some one else will tell you everything about it so far as religious matters are concerned?' It was impossible; it had even never been experienced upon. Could they suppose that a man was able to teach geography, and tell the children about Jerusalem, about Nazareth, without mentioning a word about religion? How could a child be taught even the phraseology which was employed in regard to the days of the year without speaking about religion?—When did the reckoning of years begin?—Why did they speak of 1876, or the commencement of that period? Why, it was the Christian era. 'What is the meaning of that?' a child asks. 'Oh! we are not to tell you that; it must be excluded from the schools.' Moreover, how are you to carry on the discipline of the school? A child takes a lie or he utters an oath. What is the teacher to say? Well, you say, 'It is contrary to the fitness of things that you should do so;' or, 'I will tell you by-and-by, but I dare not tell you at present what it is.' The teacher must be able, in conducting the ordinary business of the school, if necessary, to speak of religion. And it had been proposed as a question of expediency, to what category does the Queen's Anthem belong?—'God save the Queen.' Was it religion or not religion? Was it to be excluded or not excluded? The truth was, that those speculations sound all very well, but the grand peculiarity about the whole matter was that those persons who made the speculation had made no experiment to show how it could be done. There was only one secular school all over Scotland, and inasmuch as the people of the country had all concurred in the statement that there should be religious teaching, they must not be driven from their position by mere speculations. Was it not a remarkable fact that in Edinburgh 60,000 children were taught in the Heriot Schools, and only two parents had objected to their children receiving religious instruction, one of them a Jew, another a Roman Catholic? In the schools of Paisley—and if there was a place in the world where such objections might be anticipated that was the very place—there had been little or no opposition, and he would tell them a more wonderful fact than all that, namely, that in the public schools of London there were 136,000 children taught, and there had been only 136 parents (chiefly Jews and Roman Catholics) objecting—one in a thousand—to the teaching of religion in schools."

Spurgeon on Perfectionists.

He who boasts of being perfect is perfect in folly. I have been a good deal up and down the world, and I neither did see either a perfect horse or a perfect man, and I never shall until two Sundays come together. You cannot get white flour out of a coal-sack, nor perfection out of human nature; he who looks for it had better look for sugar in the sea. The old saying is, 'Lifeless, faultless.' Of dead men we should say nothing but good, but as for the living, they are all tarred, more or less, with the black brush, and half an eye can see it. Every head has a soft place in it, and every heart has its black drop. Every nose has its prickles, and every day its night. Even the sun shows spots, and the skies are darkened with clouds. Nobody is so wise but he has folly enough to stock a stall at Vanity Fair. Where I could not see the fool's-cap I have, nevertheless, heard the bells jingle. As there is no sunshine without some shadow, so is all human good mixed up with more or less evil; even poor law guardians have their little failings, and parish beadles are not wholly of heavenly nature. The best wine has its lees. All men's faults are not written on their foreheads, and it is quite as well they are not, or hats would need wide brims; yet, as sure as eggs are eggs, faults of some sort nestle in every man's bosom. There's no telling when a man's sins may show themselves, for hares pop out of a ditch just when you are not looking for them. A horse that is weak in the legs may not stumble for a mile or two, but it's in him, and the rider had better hold him up well. The tabby cat is not hissing milk just now, but leave the dairy door open, and we will see if she is not as bad a thief as the kitten. There's fire in the flint, cool as it looks; wait till the steel gets a knock at it, and you will see. Everybody can read that riddle, but it is not everybody that will remember to keep his gunpowder out of the way of the candle.

EMERSON ON THE CELLS.—Also August American literary authority, Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his essay on "Race," pays the following tribute to the ancient but ever young and potential Celtic race: "It is the oldest blood in the world—the Celtic. Some people are deciduous or transitory. Where are the Greeks? Where are the Etruscans? Where are the Romans? But the Celts, or Sidonians are an old family, of whose beginning there is no memory, and whose end is likely to be still more remote in the future; or they have endurance and productivity. They planted Britain, and gave to the sea, and mountains names which are passing and fading, but the pure voices of nature. They are forever remembered in the oldest records of Europe. They had no violent feudal

