

NATURE.

Kennel on yonder barren autumn field,  
Where wild winds blow, birds sing,  
Rains fall, comes June, comes spring,  
The secret many a year hath not revealed.

There many a dewy dawn hath writ in red  
And white, and summer's feet  
Left many an imprint sweet,  
Yet something longed for hovers still unsaid.

For thousand sunsets have not waked to speech  
The western slopes, nor night's  
Pale flock of stars the heights;  
The sea's kiss wins no answer from the beach.

Dead, silent, nature stuns before our eyes.  
We question her in vain,  
And bootless strive to gain  
Her confidence, she vouchsafes no replies.

And yet, ofttimes I think she yearns to bless  
And comfort man with sheaves  
To please him with her leaves.  
The wildest blast hath tones of tenderness.

And there are voices on the sea in storm  
Not of the waters' strife:  
Faint tones, as though some life  
Amid the tumult struggled to take form.

There is an undertone in everything,  
That comforts and uplifts,  
A light that never shifts  
Shines out of touch on the horizon ring.

I know, beyond your mountain's gloomy sides,  
There's something waits for me  
That I may never see,  
Some love-luminous face, some stretched  
Hand hides.

Some spirit, something earth would half dis-  
close,  
Half hides, invites the soul  
Unto some hidden goal,  
Which may be death, or larger life—who  
knows?

—William Prescott Foster, in Century.



CHAPTER VIII.—CONTINUED.

When Mrs. Kennard now drew near the great square over which loomed the light and pretty facade of the chief hotel, she at once perceived that Kathleen was being a great deal noticed and silently admired. "Little wonder, too," it swept through her mind, "for as she walks there now her form and face seem to embody this delightful thing of Chopin's that his majesty's musicians are playing so finely." And then Mrs. Kennard approached her daughter. But before she could reach her side, old Mrs. Madison, with wrinkled face, gouty step, and a cane big enough for a British squire beset by the same malady as herself, came hobbling forward.

"My dear Mrs. Kennard, I don't know how I can stay any longer in Saltravia unless you present me to your daughter! It isn't only that four or five young men are always tormenting me for a presentation to her, knowing that I know you. It's that lots of tiresome old persons like myself, of whichever sex, make my life a burden with their longings." Here Mrs. Madison shook her head, and so briskly that her gold-rimmed glasses trembled on her high, clear-cut nose. "Ah, Mrs. Kennard, it's we old things that are the wisest lapidaries for pronouncing on the color and water of that dearest of all diamonds, youth!"

"My daughter will be charmed to meet you, and your friends, also, my dear Mrs. Madison, of course," was the reply given by Kathleen's mother. But while she stood and strove to talk blandly with this old alienated knickerbocker (for who could forget that the Madisons were leading people in the palmy days of the Van Leriuses, and that a Madison once married a Van Lerius, as far back as 1790?) she was secretly throbbing with discomfort and chagrin.

Alonso Lispenard here in Saltravia! And not only that, but on terms of special favor with the king! It was ruin of all those delicious hopes! For the very moment that he heard Clarimond had admired Kathleen, what would he be sure to do? Prejudice his royal friend, beyond a doubt, against both herself and her child. Oh, it was too aggravating, too maddening!

When she reached Kathleen, Mrs. Kennard grasped the girl's wrist with a tremor and force that instantly betrayed her trouble.

"My dear Kathleen," she began, "I have such wretched news!"

"Wretched news, mamma?"

"Yes, don't stare at me. Everybody, I hear, is staring at you. There—I won't clutch you in that idiotic style any more. You—you know, my dear, that I—I have always prided myself on my repose."

"Well, mamma?"

"Let's walk along quietly toward the hotel, as if nothing had happened. I've just heard from Mrs. Madison that your wonderful beauty and grace have set everybody talking about you."

"And is that all that has happened?" Kathleen asked, with a decided languor.

"No. I only wish it were! My dear child, where did you think Alonso Lispenard had gone after—the breaking of your engagement? Don't look demoralized, now! Answer me!"

Kathleen had visibly started, and her change of color was manifest. "Gone?" she repeated. "I heard that he was here in Europe. You remember, mamma, something was said about an Austrian grand duke having wanted him to purchase works of art for his private gallery—but I never believed the report. It was never confirmed."

"Kathleen! Believe the report now, if you choose!"

"Believe it, mamma?"

"Yes. But change the Austrian grand duke to a Saltravian king."

Kathleen looked fixedly at her mother for several seconds as they moved still nearer to the steps of the hotel. When she spoke it was clearly to show that she had in a measure understood.

"Alonso is here?" she faltered. "You mean that?"

"He lives here, and lives under the very wing, so to speak, of Clarimond. It seems that his friend, Eric Thaxter, sent for him to come on here after the failure." Then Mrs. Kennard gave a few further explanations which ended by the time they reached the huge inclosed balcony of the hotel and ascended its steps. Kathleen sank into a chair, not trembling, but looking as if tremors might at any moment begin.

"We must go away from here, mamma," she presently said, glancing up into her mother's face while that lady stood in placid grandeur beside her. "We must go at once."

"Oh, now, my dear Kathleen! You surely won't be so foolish."

"He will think we came solely on his account."

"But I tell you he isn't here."

"Still, he may return any hour. No, mamma; I will not stay. Let us go to Vallambrosa to-morrow. We intended going there, you know, when you suddenly got this craze for Saltravia."

Mrs. Kennard tightened her lips together, stared straight ahead, and gave not a syllable of response. Oh, of course Kathleen must have her own way! It would be folly to keep her here against her will, for that had modes of making itself felt which coercion sooner or later failed to profit by. And to think that the presence of this detestable Alonso should shatter such a lovely edifice of shining and prismatic dream! Ah, it was too hard, rowing! In a certain sense Kathleen was right; the horrid creature might think she had come here because of him, though any thrills of dignity on the subject would have been wholly idle if it were not that this bugbear was actually an intimate of the king. In that abominated capacity he was fate appointed, as one might say, to head himself and her daughter off. Scolding tears of ire and disappointment gathered to the eyes of Kathleen's mother while she stood and watched the spacious hotel grounds, dotted with strollers and sweeping on toward the palace, white and splendid against its dark-green mountain side. She had raised her handkerchief, to brush away these fiery tears if in reality they should show signs of falling, when a kind of flurry among the people on the laurels made her curious to learn its cause. This soon became plain, as she discerned a group at some distance away, headed by a man of noble and gracious presence. She had seen Clarimond a day or two ago, on the occasion when Kathleen had so evidently won his heart, and once having seen it, was not easy to forget him. She now leaned down and murmured to Kathleen:

"The king, my dear. And I think he is coming this way."

"Let us go upstairs, mamma," said Kathleen, rising. "Or will you remain here, and shall I—?"

The words died on her lips, for just then old Mrs. Madison came puffing up

front teeth and a baby note on her chin, becomes an unconscious goddess. I don't wonder Lons adores her still, and I don't wonder Clarimond is aching to know her."

But aloud Eric said, with his native affable bluntness:

"My dear Miss Kennard, it's not a very mighty planet, after all. Don't bore yourself about Alonso's proximity. When he knows that you've honored Saltravia with your presence, he will probably be quite too ashamed of his past misconduct to let you get the faintest glimpse of him. Oh, I know just how atrociously he behaved. He's told me, and I've scolded him without pity."

Kathleen bit her lip and watched the speaker for an instant with searching and wistful eyes.

"He's told you?" she breathed. "But if you don't think me to blame at all, Mr. Thaxter, he—must have given you a very generous version of the whole affair." Then she drew herself up, and with almost a lofty calmness went on: "But we are going to-morrow. We have decided to push on toward Vallambrosa. No doubt you know it. They say it is so delightful, and quiet there. Retirement is what I most care for just now."

"Retirement?" echoed Eric with a mock gesture of despair. "And here I am, Miss Kennard, come to you as an envoy from the king, who greatly desires the pleasure of your acquaintance."

Perhaps Eric had without intention loosened his voice a little. Anyway, Mrs. Kennard heard all that he had just said; and considering the fact that Mrs. Madison had a minute ago uttered certain tidings of a most exhilarant sort to her, she was now suddenly transported once more with hopeful surprise.

"My dear," she said to Kathleen, as the latter drew backward several steps, with a distinct show of reluctance, even deprecation, "I trust that if Mr. Thaxter wishes to present you to the king you will not hesitate to accompany him!"

But here Eric shook his head and broke into a light laugh.

"Miss Kennard needs not to accompany me, by any means," he said. "If you will merely walk with her down toward this little fountain where the bronze tritons are, I will bring the king to her."

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THE LAND QUESTION.

Can the Populists Lead Us Back to the Feet of Mount Sinai?

From the September number of the Springfield (Mo.) People's Forum I clip the following:

NOW OR NEVER!

If you want to secure a home, or buy one or more farms as an investment, now is the time to strike! Very soon Uncle Sam (although rich enough) will have no more farms to give away, or subject to entry. In a very short time there will not be a tract of government land, of value for a home, to be had. When that time comes, you will simply have to buy at holder's option, and most likely at a greatly increased price. Buy while you may at reduced prices, and do not wait until all the bargains are picked up. We offer, etc., etc.

The foregoing paragraph, so far as it goes, is a truthful representation of the present conditions and a fair statement of the workings of a system of land tenure the results of which, in England, the English government is endeavoring to neutralize by loaning to tenant farmers money at a nominal rate of interest with which to purchase small holdings of land, the sale of which has to be made compulsory on the part of the small percentage of the population which constitutes the land owners of the kingdom of Great Britain.

It is a very safe affirmation to make that the system of land tenure now in vogue, pushed to its ultimate conclusions, will take for those who own the land the total product of the toll of the entire nation except a "bare subsistence" for the workers, and for capital, the lowest rate of interest that will induce its investment in productive enterprises. And we cannot flatter ourselves that here in the United States such a condition is a remote contingency. Not only is there now no government land that is fit for settlement by agricult