

## POETRY.

## A LOVER'S FAITH.

FANNY! upon thy breast I may not lie!  
 Fanny! thou dost not hear me when I speak!  
 Where art thou, love?—Around I turn my eye,  
 And as I turn, the tear is on my cheek.  
 Was it a dream I did my love behold  
 Indeed my lonely couch?—Methought the  
 breath  
 Fann'd not her bloodless lip; her eye was cold  
 And hollow, and the livery of death  
 Invested her pale forehead,—Sainted maid,  
 My thoughts oft rest with thee in thy cold  
 grave,  
 Through the long wintry night, when wind  
 and wave  
 Rock the dark house where thy poor head is laid,  
 Yet hush! my fond heart, hush! there is a shore  
 Of better promise; and I know at last  
 When the long Sabbath of the tomb is past,  
 We two shall meet in Christ to part no more.

## CANADIAN LEGENDS.

## MIDSUMMER EVE,

## A TALE OF THE OTTAWA.

—Was it a dream;—  
 Or a delusion of the waking senses,  
 Ting'd with the airy wildness of a fiction,  
 Yet strongly mark'd with all the sombre truth  
 Of nature and reality?

Many theories have been fabricated, and not a few opinions advanced both by ancient and modern philosophers, respecting those wonderful delusions of the senses which sometimes take place, and which make so strong an impression on the faculties of the mind, that reason in her coolest moments, is at a loss to determine whether they were beguiled by a reality or a visionary deception. We have many instances on record, and not a few in our own times, of strange occurrences of this description which have defied the most subtle definitions of philosophical disquisition, and will, it is probable, ever set them at defiance.

It was on the quarter deck of one of the many Steam Boats that navigates the waters of the noble St. Lawrence, that a number of the passengers were seated one mild starlight summer's night, enjoying a little social chit-chat to wile away the time until the hour of retiring to rest. There was a sufficiency of light in the atmosphere to admit of the vessel's continuing her course; which she did, gallantly stemming the deep rolling stream, her majestic progress distinguishable from the shore on either side—whose dusky outlines were relieved at times by the occasional twinkling of a taper in a cottage window;—by the brilliant-plume like appearance of the glowing sparks which issued forth in profusion from her chimnies; whilst the low rushing sound of her dipping paddles, and the often repeated cry of the lookout man in the bow, and attendant response of the steersman, were the only disturbance to the stillness that reigned around.

Whether it was owing to the influence of the hour, or to that predilection which some people have for whatever relates to the marvellous, it so fell out that after a number of desultory and common-place topics had been discussed, the discourse turned on the subject of supernatural appearances and visitations. Many indeed were the terrific and heart appalling relations of what had either been heard or seen by some themselves, or from the hearsay of others; and one story succeeded another in quick succession, until the imaginations of most of the listeners were heated to a degree of fearful enthusiasm, by the thus disclosed secrets of the spiritual world. Some few there were who ventured to hint their scepticism with regard to the existence of ghosts, fairies, witches, and the like etceteras, but were immediately assailed with an overpowering torrent of matter of fact, as it was termed, in support of which the most indisputable authority was of course advanced, so that if its substance did not exactly produce

conviction in the minds of those to whom it was addressed, the vociferous vehemence with which it was uttered, constrained them at least to confess their infidelity to themselves in future.

After some time had elapsed, during which the subject had been sustained with a vigour that only flagged from the want of something new to incite its renovation, and the narrators had seemingly exhausted their budgets of wonder, and, to use a sporting phrase, were completely at a dead stand; when an elderly gentleman of a s-date and respectable mien, and who had hitherto paid a silent but marked attention to all that had been said, requested the attention of the company to what he was about to communicate. "Gentlemen," said he, "some of you have to-night recourted many certainly very singular and surprising incidents, some of them it appears from personal experience; permit me to relate an occurrence of the kind which happened to myself, which, although it bears a partial difference from the general tenor of your narrations, you will allow, after hearing it, to be even more strange than a ghostly visit from the regions of the dead, the midnight vagaries of frisking imps and demons, or the fantastical equestrianism of witches mounted on broomsticks.

About forty years ago, when I was a wild stripling of eighteen, I went from Montreal to officiate as a clerk to a man superintending a potash manufactory at the Longue Sault of the Ottawa, or Grand River. Some of you have seen, and few but have heard of that dreadful rapid, far more tremendous than the celebrated nine mile race of the St. Lawrence. The very pilots, who from their frequency of passing, one would naturally suppose carelessly indifferent, from their familiarity to its peculiar dangers, yet never enter the horrible commotion of its roaring surges without dread and apprehension. In fact, in passing through them the strongest nerves cannot remain unshaken.—To one accustomed to the sight, or to a stranger, they are equally terrific; and present an appearance of which an European, unacquainted with these characteristics of our Canadian rivers, cannot possibly form an idea.

It seems as if the noble river, roused in to an indignant fury at finding its course impeded by the huge masses of rock which obstruct its channel here, vents its boiling rage in lashing them with its angry billows; now rising above their summits in wreaths of foaming surf, now sinking and whirling in circling eddies around their base, and to a fanciful mind appearing to shriek in wild despair, at the impotence of its efforts; and being ever attended with a deafening roar, adds much to its horrid sublimity. A person contemplating this strife of waters from the shore, would conceive it next to a moral impossibility for a boat or canoe to live in it for an instant; but they go through frequently, and with few exceptions, likewise in safety. I have often stood for hours observing them jump the chutes—small cascades,—which they did with the rapidity of lightning; at times partly hid by the dancing spray and foam; at others rising to the top of a wave, and suspended there, apparently to be plunged into destruction the next moment.

I well recollect one Sunday morning, my watching with a strong feeling of anxious apprehension the approach of two Indian canoes to the head of the principal, and most dangerous part of the rapid. From the manner in which they were loaded, I think they must have belonged to one family: An Indian and a young lad were in the forenoon, and a squaw with two small children in that behind. The man took the proper channel, and his canoe ran with the speed of an arrow in safety through, but the

poor squaw was not so fortunate; From inattention in steering or some other cause, she lost the wake of the other canoe, and by so doing missed the right course.—She perceived her error and consequent situation when it was too late for retrieval, though she struggled hard and desperately—and well she might, knowing the inevitable alternative—to regain what she had lost; but it would not do.—The impetuosity of the rushing stream prevailed against her feeble efforts, and hurried her swiftly on to destruction. I saw her plainly as if in despair fling her paddle away, and in that agony of feeling which the sudden certainty of a frightful death must inspire, throw herself forward and with a maternal affection which even on this dreadful brink of eternity was paramount, clasp her children in her embrace. The decision of their fate was but the work of a moment; They were swept by an eddying current over a shelf of rocks; against which they were whirled and dashed for the space of a few seconds, and then borne away, the roaring billows closed forever on them and their earthly existence.

But to return from a digression which I would not have made were it not in some degree connected with my story:—as I said before, our works were situated on the banks of the Ottawa, near the lower end of this terrible place. The country in its vicinity was a perfect wilderness, when compared to what it is at present. Then it was a gloomy forest to the very edge of the river; and its dreary sameness only broken here and there by the log hut and cleared patch that supplied him with food of some hardy settler; who amid the roaring din of rushing waters, and the death like solitude of their trackless environs, calmed only by the howlings of their savage tenants, toiled to obtain, at the best, but the means of sustaining a miserable existence.

As my occupation did not intrude much on my time, I had many leisure hours, and from the want of a better way of spending them, I used to visit a man settled about a couple of miles above our establishment. He cultivated but a small portion of land which furnished him with a bare sufficiency of corn and potatoes for his family, and which with the produce of his fishing, throughout the summer season, which was in fact his great dependence, subsisted them in a plenty if not a variety of food. This man was of a reserved, shy disposition, which evinced itself in his manner and speech, so much as to make his society more disagreeable than otherwise; but it was not from any particular charm in him, his family, or abode, that induced me to visit them so often, but merely because it served to vary the monotony of our own circumscribed society.

I happened one evening to be returning home from one of these visits, rather later than was my usual practice; and my road from necessity lay along the bank of the river, I was carefully picking my steps among the masses of stone and drift wood that lay heaped in every direction. I had not, however, proceeded half a mile, when of a sudden my ears were astounded by a hideous yelling, as if all the wolves, wildcats, and devils in Canada were assembled to howl and shriek in concert, and being loudly echoed in the stillness of the dark forest behind, and possessing a frightful indiscreteness from the adjoining roar of the rapids, had a truly appalling effect, and brought me to a stand for some moments. The noise appeared to come from the bottom of a long recess or vista that ran directly back for a hundred yards or more into the gloomy wood, and the thickening obscurity of twilight prevented me from discerning by what or whom it was produced. I had a loaded musket in my hand, it is true, but it added little to the confidence and security

of the moment; but a sudden crash and rushing sound at the extremity I have alluded to, tempted me to present them with its contents, and I fired in the direction of the infernal tumult. The noise was immediately hushed, but the sound as of many footsteps pressing towards me, becoming too distinct for my courage to await their approach, I need scarcely observe my farther progress homeward was far from being dilatory.

The next time I saw my friend the fisherman, I recounted this adventure, and his wife who was present, remarked that it confirmed what she had often heard related of that spot.—That in the commencement of the revolutionary war, a band of Indians took a family of whites prisoners, and scalped and murdered them there with every circumstance of atrocious cruelty and barbarism, and ever since, it was said terrifying sighs and noises were often seen and heard about the place. I laughed heartily at the good women's elucidation of what I own had frightened me at the time in no small degree. Her husband smiled, but in a manner which convinced me: was more at the fearful vehemence of his wife's assertions, than from a disbelief of their substance. I had ever been a hardened sceptic in such matters, and never failed to deride all tales of a supernatural cast wherever I heard them; and on this occasion I absolutely affronted the honest matron by the obstreperous ridicule with which I displayed my incredulity. The man shortly after leaving the house to resume his fishing, I accompanied him, and continued to banter the explanation afforded by his wife's legendary narrative, expressing my own conviction that he noise had proceeded from a pack of hungry wolves, at the same time asking his own opinion of the affair.—"Why," said he, "your conjecture may be right, but the story as it has been told you is believed in these parts, and no one acquainted with it will settle near the spot. I was once as great an unbeliever of these things as you appear to be, but my doubts have been much shaken by what I am now going to relate.—About five years ago, I was out fishing not far from the place one beautiful Midsummer Eve. The moon was shining clearly, and I was beginning to feel weary and drowsy, when, of a sudden, I saw before me a ship with her sails set, making her way against the raging stream, through a narrow rapid that nothing in life or belonging to this world could stem for an instant. I thought that I had been sleeping, and what I had seen was in a dream, and thinking it such, I made no mention of it to my wife or any other person. A few days after, I was attacked by a severe illness, which I attributed to my frequent exposure to chilling damps when employed in night fishing. However, in a while I recovered, and the dream, as I thought it, had nearly passed from my memory, when by a singular chance, the succeeding Midsummer Eve, I happened to be at the same occupation, in the same place, and at nearly the very same hour; when I again beheld the ship just as I had seen it that night twelvemonth. This second appearance strangely affected me, I had not been sleeping, neither had my imagination been heated by intoxication from liquor, as I never indulge in its use; and it seemed as though a curse attended its sight, for I was seized with the same illness as before, only differing from that by its greater severity. I have not made known the circumstance to a living soul save yourself; and since then I have never handled, nor will I attempt to use while in this part of the country a fishing line on Midsummer Eve. You yourself may judge whether I have not had sufficient reason."

To be Continued.

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