

## Literature, &amp;c.

THE BAG OF GOLD.  
BY ALFRED CROWQUILL.

BRIGHTLY shone the moon over the fair city of Venice, and wherever her silvery rays kissed the dark waters of the many canals which intersect that mart of merchants, as the gay gondolas passed and repassed, rippling the smooth surface with their prows and fin-like oars, they appeared like the shining scales of huge serpents, undulating and sporting among her marble palaces.

In one of the remotest corners of the place dwelt the usurer Guiseppe Valdoni. Rumour reported him as rich as Croesus; but he had one gem in his possession which he valued above his gold, his only daughter, Bianca, a jewel without a flaw! Serenades were nightly performed under the balcony of her residence, and all the gallants of Venice endeavored to win the attention of the wealthy heiress of Valdoni.

Of all the suitors who sought the lovely Bianca, none found favor in her eyes but Ludovico, the gay, bold, reckless Ludovico. In person he was eminently handsome, and in her estimation, who had only the opportunity of judging of a lover by sight, he was far above all his competitors. She loved him! ay, and with a fervour which is only known in southern climes.

Truth to say, Ludovico was an inconsistent man, a gambler, and a bankrupt in every virtue.

It was midnight, and Bianca, with palpitating heart, was watching in the balcony. Ludovico came along in a gondola. She threw to him a bag of gold, and was about to descend, and to place herself under the protection of her suitor.

"Dearest, best beloved Bianca," said the deceiver, "to-morrow at this hour I will be here and bear you away, if I survive the disappointment of this night.—Everything will then be ready for my bride. Farewell!" And he rowed briskly away from the startled damsel, who for his sake had betrayed the confidence of her fond father by abstracting the bag of gold.

Cold and heartless as was Ludovico, he felt a pang as he lost sight of the confiding and affectionate Bianca. "But," thought he, with plausible sophistry, "has she not robbed her own father! And shall I keep faith with one who has proved herself faithless to him who gave her being? Worthless, wanton!"

The gallant, having reached his destination, hastily moored his gondola, and eagerly clutching the bag of gold, concealed it beneath his cloak, and hurried homewards. Passing beneath a dark colonnade, reposing in the still shadow of the moon, and calculating in his own mind the worth of the ducats of which he had so unworthily possessed himself, he was startled by approaching footsteps, and, turning round, observed three men close upon his track. They were evidently bent upon overhauling him, and almost before he had presence of mind to draw his rapier, they fell upon him, and, encumbered by his cloak and the weight of his treasures he was unable to repel their sanguinary attack, and dropped lifeless at the feet of the brigands, pierced with many wounds. The bag of gold chinked upon the pavement; they seized the weighty prize, and, rushing from the spot, turned into the Piazza di San Marco, thence crossing the Rialto, they encountered the night-watch, who surrounded and captured them.

They were searched, speedily deprived of their newly acquired treasure, and conducted forthwith to the guard-house, where being recognized by the authorities as indifferent characters, and being examined separately, giving a different account of their objects and pursuits, they were locked up, in order to be examined again the following morning by the magistrate.

They would willingly have relinquished their plunder to bribe their captors; but the latter were too numerous to act dishonestly without the fear of detection, although, under other circumstances, and for such a consideration, they might have refrained from pressing the charge.

The magistrate before whom the culprits were ushered on the following morning, was a stern man, and possessed great influence in Venice.

"Fortunately for ye," said he, addressing the prisoners, "there is no proof that you have obtained this bag with violence; but we may reasonably infer that such plunder was not filched from the lawful possessor while he lived. Justice, ever associated with divine mercy, and of which we are the unworthy dispenser, charitably gives you the benefit of our ignorance and the want of evidence. Your lives are spared, and may you repent of your evil deeds. We attach the property in behalf of the rightful owner; and in the meantime consign you to imprisonment, in order that, should any evidence hereafter arise in your favour, you may have the benefit of it. Away with them!"

The prisoners were removed, and the night-watch who had captured them were liberally rewarded. The bag of gold remained with the magistrate, who was too much occupied with official business to set on foot any inquiries respecting the lawful possessor. He placed the treasure in his strong chest. When the investigation took place, his two nephews were present, and contemplated the bag, which appeared to have some talismanic influence upon all who gazed upon it, with an irresistible desire of appropriation. They laughed at the idea of its being locked up, and consigned to the same fate as the prisoners. In their libe-

ral philosophy they determined that distribution was far wiser than accumulation; and, with a virtue that is so uncommon in the world, they had long practised what they preached. In the exercise of this moral principle, they had both become deeply indebted, and with that fervent generosity known only to the heart of youth, they longed to liquidate their liabilities. There was no owner for the bag of gold; therefore they argued that it could not be better disbursed than in the payment of their debts of honor. Having come to this conclusion, the two honest youths resolved to cut up this stray golden goose, and feast themselves and their creditors therewith.

When sleep had sealed the eyes of all within the magistrate's dwelling, Giovanni and Guiseppe stealthily quitted their chambers, and proceeded to the strong room, where the bag of gold was carefully deposited. The sympathy of their pursuit had compelled them, although individually reluctant, to come to a mutual understanding. Now Guiseppe, who was married, contended with his cousin, that he was entitled to two-thirds of the treasure; his liabilities too, were larger than Giovanni's, and, in his opinion, justified this division. They both at last came to the determination of decamping, should they obtain possession, and thus escape both the ire of their uncle, and the importunities of their creditors. Guiseppe's wife was on a visit to her father, and his only son, a beautiful boy of four years old, was left to his care; he therefore took the precaution of consigning him to the care of a trusty gondolier, who was to row to a certain point, where he proposed to join him.

But to return to the magistrate's strong room, which overlooked the canal. They succeeded with some difficulty, in forcing open the chest containing the treasure, and Giovanni grasped the coveted prize.

"Tis mine!" cried he, exultingly.

"Tis ours," said Guiseppe, holding out his eager hand.

"Stay," replied Giovanni; "I have had half of the danger—surely I am entitled to half the plunder. Nothing less will satisfy me."

"How!—why, did you not promise to be content with one third," said Guiseppe.

"I had not then possession," replied his cousin.

Guiseppe burned with rage, and, darting forward snatched the bag of gold from his cousin's grasp, and rushing towards the balcony, exclaimed, "Do you persist in your demand? Will nothing less satisfy you?"

"Corpo di Bacco, nothing!" answered the other savagely.

"Then thus ends the dispute," said Guiseppe—and, opening the casement, he wildly cast the gold into the canal.

A piercing shriek followed, not from the disappointed Giovanni, but from the waters below. Guiseppe had cast the bag of gold upon the innocent head of his child, and killed it!

Giovanni fled, conscious of his participation in the robbery, and too soon the distracted father learned the fate of his boy, and went raving mad!

Giovanni, the fugitive, was reported to have plundered his uncle. The gondolier, meanwhile, had cunningly concealed the bag of gold and produced a log of wood, which he asserted had been cast from the window, and was the cause of the death of Guiseppe's son; and safe in the insanity of the wretched father, he carried home the treasure.

A slip of parchment was tied round the neck of the fatal bag, indicating that it contained one thousand golden ducats. But, through fear or some mysterious influence, the gondolier could not be induced to break the seal that fastened it; fearful even of keeping it in his humble dwelling, he carefully enclosed it in a box, and buried it in his little garden.

Now the gondolier had an only daughter, Verodica, who was very beautiful, and she had many suitors among her own class. The handsome, gay and dissipated Beppo, however, was her chosen favourite. He rowed so well, and sang so sweetly, that the maid was charmed, notwithstanding his suspected gallantries.

An old tradesman of Venice happened to meet Veronica one evening, as her father was taking her home in his gondola, and became enamored of her charms. He sought her father and offered her his "protection." The gondolier confessed himself highly flattered by his notice, but declined the honor.

"Take her to wife," said the bluff gondolier, "and she is yours. I can give her a dowry, say the word, and the girl and a thousand golden ducats are yours."

"What!" exclaimed the tradesman, whose avarice equalled his new passion; "you are joking."

"By the Virgin!" replied the father, "I speak the truth."

The affair was soon settled between the gondolier and the tradesman; but there was one person who was by no means pleased at the bargain, Beppo, who vowed vengeance against the bridegroom, although he was quite ignorant of the means which had brought about the marriage.

Veronica was married, and the old man conveyed the maid and the bag of gold to his house. On the following morning he was found stabbed in fifty places by a poniard. As he was but a tradesman, the authorities took little or no trouble in seeking out the assassin. These affairs were so common in the city of merchants.

The widow took possession of the old man's property, and concealed the bag of gold, which had been the fatal cause of this unwise and unpropitious alliance.

A few months afterwards the tearless widow married the murderer of her husband. Guilt, however, rarely goes unpunished; and ere a

few short months elapsed, Veronica discovered that the man whom she once idolized, and for whom she had sacrificed so much, was in every way unworthy of her love. He lavishly expended the estate of her late husband in his unlawful pleasure, while she, deserted by him, pined in sorrow and in solitude. Proud, overbearing, and revengeful, Veronica's passion of love was soon transformed to hatred the most intense.

The bag of gold, which she had carefully concealed, remained untouched. Depositing it in a place of safety, she instantly sought the presence of a judge, and denounced her renegade and unworthy husband as a murderer!

Beppo was seized, and the evidence she produced was so conclusive that the worthless husband was condemned to the rack.

Veronica retired to a nunnery, hoping to obtain pardon for her sins, and presented the bag of gold as an offering to the convent!

The bursar or treasurer of the convent was a certain Brother Anselmo; a thin, bilious man, severe and taciturn, who verily looked like a skeleton clothed in parchment. He was regarded as almost a saint by the good sisters, so punctilious was he in the performance of the religious duties. It is true that he had been a great reprobate in his youth; and it is equally true that he had become a great hypocrite. The bag of gold was confided to his custody; and so fearful was he of its corrupting influence, that he resolved to convey it far from the pure atmosphere of the convent, for fear of contamination. This was assuredly carrying his scruple to the extreme. He first, probably entertained the insane idea of casting the "root of evil" beneath the blue waves of the Adriatic; but upon mature deliberation he contended that it would be better to lay it by for charitable purposes. Sinner as he was, he might one day be in want of it; he therefore resolved to deposit it forthwith in the hands of a trusty friend-in-need, who had supplied his necessities in the days of his lamented extravagance.

Unfortunately for brother Anselmo, he carried the bag of gold to the lawful owner, who instantly recognized and reclaimed the stolen ducats. He possessed irrefragable proofs that the parchment label was in his own hand writing, and embraced the precious bag of gold with his fondness of a parent who had recovered his lost child. Brother Anselmo vainly remonstrated, and the interview concluded by the miserly moneylender unceremoniously kicking him out, retaining possession of the fatal treasure.

Fain would the astonished bursar have resented this unseemly rebuff; but a consciousness of his own villany made him gulp the indignity which was put upon him: but he vowed vengeance. Before he could put in execution his secret purposes, his delatation was discovered; he was summoned before the tribunal, and condemned to pass the remainder of his wretched existence in a dungeon.

The Bag of Gold thus returned unbroken to the hands of the rightful owner, having been in its travels the cause of so much crime, and misery to its intermediate possessors.

Wealth, obtained by a long life of toil and honesty does not always produce happiness; ill-gotten gold—never!

From the Bermudian.

## SACRED MELODY.

When by the sober light  
Of weary skies, I waken,  
Tones on the breezy night  
Of music long forsaken,  
My memory seem  
A troubled dream  
From haunts of old returning,  
Dim in the glare  
Of starlight, where  
The day was brightly burning!

Where are my kindred gone?  
Why leave me thus complaining?  
Of all that I have known,  
How few are now remaining!  
What friendship's roll'd  
In shrouds of old,  
From cold oblivion waking,  
Recall the tears  
Of other years,  
When sever'd hearts were breaking!

Then what remains of earth  
To woo the soul from heaven?  
What beauty, fame, or worth,  
Since dearest ties are given?  
If Faith illumine  
My opening tomb,  
Ye fleshly bonds dis sever,—  
And let me mount  
Where Friendship's fount  
Sends forth its streams forever!

REV. W. LEGGETT.

Dublin University Magazine for April.  
From an article entitled "Some new Jottings  
in my Note Book, by a Dreamer, we make  
the following selections.

## THOUGHTS ON CHILDHOOD.

I do not think we sufficiently sympathize with our juniors in years. That false pride, that dearly-bought experience, through which we maintain a superiority over them, dispose us too much to overlook their many beautiful traits of character. We do not remember that these little people, in their own selves, and so far as their unripened sensibilities carry them, are each of them the centre of a circle, the moving point round which revolves the whole world beside. Neither do we think often enough, that there is a freshness in these young souls which may profitably revive our jaded hearts, and an honesty of purpose like an atmosphere surrounding them, which it would

be well for us sometimes to breathe; and that lastly, by "becoming as little children" we are getting taught by those who, of all instructors on earth, are nearest heaven; for they have come most recently from it, and its fragrance is still floating about them.

I envy not the man who can look on the open countenance of the true-hearted boy, or the fair and delicate face of girlhood, with those pensive eyes and long golden hair, and not call to mind his own by-gone years, nor seek to read for those untired spirits what is written for them in the book of daily life. Were I to try to feel like him, I should not succeed; for I regard the young with an intense sympathy. Remembering most vividly, as I do, when I was one of them, and recollecting the upward feeling wherewith I used to regard the full-grown, I cannot help now shaping my thoughts downwards, and becoming one of them again. It may be, that we do not give in this world sufficient individuality to each with whom we mix. The selfish feeling of making the world one thing, and ourselves the other, closes up the heart against all the gentler sympathies; and the apprehension of childishness, and its imputation to us, prevent our entering into their little feelings, and giving them their due weight and importance.

Yet who remembers not the days of his boyhood? What traveller, even in the midst of toilsome and busy years, when manhood had hardened his heart, and disappointment taught him to rejoice no more on earth, did not turn his eye backward to his father's manly welcome, the tender reception from his mother, his young sisters' proud trusting in him, and his happy home, whither no care nor sorrow could pursue him—the family hearth was a sanctuary and there he was safe.

The innocence of childhood, consisting, as it does, in the ignorance of evil, is for me the one charm which makes it so like what I dream of heaven. Alas! how often, when I gazed on the fair hair of the young, and eyes that looked no evil, have I in my heart shed tears that such whiteness of soul was no longer mine own—bitter tears of repentance, but ineffectual ones likewise, for they were the lament for what had long since departed. The fruit had been tasted, and the paradise of primal harmlessness wandered from for ever.

## ON HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

O, the littleness of human knowledge! All that we know is, nothing can be known. Mystery of mysteries are we full often to ourselves; and if we know not what is in us—if when we cast the glance of anxious inquiry within, and ask individually, "What am I?" the hollowness of vacuity only reverberates the question—how can we hope to comprehend what is not of ourselves?

The world talk of "mental acquirements." Mental acquirements! and what are they? The astronomer will tell you that Science has now, like the giants of old, scaled the heavens; yea that he, even he, has in his wisdom meted out the stars—that he has computed their number, and discovered their positions—that he has observed their progress, and marked their varied revolutions. But turn, and ask the wisest man something further, and behold his emptiness! Ask him, What is any one of those glowing orbs of which he so vaunteth his knowledge? Is it only

"A speck of tinsel, fixed in heaven  
To light the midnight of his native town."  
Or, is it a world like unto our own? Are cares and fears, and sorrows all there, enveloping it like a sky? and is it only its measureless distance which invests it with such lustre? Do they long to discover what beings people so glorious a fabric, and gazing do they

"Wonder what is there,  
So beautiful it seems?"

Ask him then any of these questions, and where is his knowledge?  
Again, visit the physiologist, and enquire of him, where is that thinking portion of man, his true self, seated? He can tell you much of its divine functions, but nothing of its real nature; he can dilate on its mighty and mysterious powers, but what tangible idea can he afford you of itself? Bring him to the now-made corpse—the temple in ruins, from which the guardian deity is departed—the signet, whereon *Ichibod*, the word of woe, is engraven—and ask him, where in that tabernacle abode its inmate? whence arose that strange communion between earth and heaven? How came the worm and the God to be united in that weak frame? Alas, he can give you no reply; or should he try to reason out the question, he may lead you, apparently, a step or two further, and then will be compelled to desist.

The great Sanctuary of Knowledge mortal foot has never entered; the veil which separates it from our gaze has not yet been uplifted; and though at times we fancy we have advanced beyond our fellows towards tracing its unseen recesses, we in reality but touch the curtain which trembles in our hold; and the densest mist that beclouds us is—ourselves! Things alien to us we can fancy we understand; the world that is about us we can, in our hours of musing, contemplate and admire; but the world within passeth knowledge. The mind, though itself the seat of understanding, like the eye—so Locke compares it—cannot view itself; and thus remains in ignorance of its own true nature.

## Provincial Lectures.

[We are indebted to the Saint John New Brunswick, for the following summary of Mr. Perley's ninth Lecture at the Mechanics' Institute of that city, on the Rivers of this Province.]