

Literature, &c.

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UTOUCH AND TOUCHU.

BY I. MARIA CHILD.

It was a bright autumnal day when two boys went forth to gather nuts. One was keeneyed and self important in his gait. The other had mild, deep eyes, and his motions were like flowers swaying to a gentle breeze. Alfred, the keen eyed, mounted the tree and shook it. 'I should like to own a dozen such trees,' said he, 'and have all the nuts to myself.'

'Oh see how beautifully the setting sun shines slanting through the boughs on the trunk and branches! It glows like gold!' exclaimed Ernest.

'If the sun were like Midas, that we read about at school, there would be some fun in it,' replied Alfred; 'for if it turned all it touched into real gold, I could peel off the bark and buy a horse with it.'

Ernest gazed silently at the golden sea of clouds in the west, and then at the warm gleam it cast on the old walnut tree. He stood thus but a moment; for his companion aimed a nut at his head and shouted, 'Make haste to fill the basket you lazy fellow.'

The nuts were soon gathered, and the boys stretched themselves on the grass, talked over school affairs. A flock of birds flew over their heads towards the south. 'They are flying away from winter,' said Ernest. 'How I should like to go with them to where the palms and coconuts grow. See how beautifully they skim along the air.'

'I wish I had a gun,' rejoined Alfred, 'I would have some of them for supper.'

It was a mild autumn twilight. The cows had gone from the pastures, and all was still save the monotonous bass of the crickets. The fitful whistling of the boys gradually subsided into dreamy silence. As they lay thus, winking drowsily Ernest saw a queer little dwarf peep from under an arching root of the walnut tree. His little dots of blue eyes looked cold and opaque, as if they were made of turquoise. His hands were like the claws of a bird. But he was surely a gentleman of property and standing, for his brown velvet vest was embroidered with gold, and a diamond fastened his hat band. While Ernest wondered who he could be, his attention was attracted by a bright little vision hovering in the air before him. At first he thought it was a large insect, or a small bird; but as it floated ever nearer and nearer, he perceived a lovely little face with tender luminous eyes. Her robe seemed like soap bubbles glancing in the sun. And under her bonnet, made of an inverted white petunia blossom, the little ringlets shone like finest threads of gold. The stamen of a white lily served her for a wand, and she held it towards him saying in tones of soft beseechment, 'Let me touch your eyes.'

'You had better touch my wand. You will find it much more to the purpose,' croaked the dwarf under the walnut root. 'Look here, would you like to have this?' and he shook a purse full of coins as he spoke.

'I don't like your cold eyes and your skinny fingers,' replied Ernest. 'Pray who are you?'

'My name is Utouch,' answered the gnome, 'and I bring great luck wherever I go.'

'And what is yours, dear little spirit of the air?' asked Ernest.

She looked lovingly into his eyes and answered, 'My name is Touchu, Shall I be your friend for life?'

He smiled and eagerly replied, 'Oh yes! oh yes! your face is so full of love.'

She descended gracefully and touched his eyes with the lily stamen. The air became redolent with delicate perfume, like fragrant violets kissed by the strong south wind. A rainbow arched the heavens, and reflected its beautiful image on a mirror of mist. The old tree reached forth friendly arms, and cradled the sunbeams on its bosom. Flowers seemed to nod and smile, as if they knew him very well, and the little birds sang into his inmost soul. Presently he felt that he was rising slowly and undulating on the air, like a winged seed when it is breathed upon; and away he sailed on fleecy clouds under the arch of the rainbow. A mocking laugh roused him from his trance, and he heard Utouch, the gnome, exclaim jeeringly, 'There he goes in one of his air castles, on a voyage to the moon! Then he felt himself falling through the air, and all at once he was on the ground. Birds, flowers, rainbow, all were gone. Twilight had deepened into a dreary evening; winds sighed through the trees, and the crickets kept up their mournful creaking tones. Ernest was afraid to be alone. He felt round for his companion, and shook him by the arm, exclaiming, 'Alfred, Alfred, wake up, I have had a wonderful fine dream, here on the grass.'

'So have I,' replied Alfred rubbing his eyes. 'Why need you wake me just as the old fellow was dropping a purse full of money into my hand?'

'What old fellow?' inquired Ernest.

'He called himself Utouch,' answered Albert, 'and he promised to be my constant companion. I hope he will keep his word; for I like an old chap, that drops a purse of gold into your hand, whenever you ask for it.'

'Why I dreamed of that same old fellow,' said Ernest, 'but I didn't like his looks.'

'Perhaps he didn't show you the full purse,' said Alfred.

'Yes he did,' replied Ernest; 'but I felt such love for the little fairy with tender eyes and heart melting voice, that I chose her for my life friend. And oh, she made the earth so beautiful!'

His companion laughed and said, 'I dreamed of her too. So you preferred that floating soap bubble, did you? I should have guessed as much. But come and help me to carry the nuts home for I am hungry for my supper.'

Years passed, and the boys were men. Ernest sat writing in a small chamber that looked towards the setting sun. His little child had hung a prismatic chandelier on the window, and he wrote amid the rainbows that it cast over his paper. In a simple vase on his desk stood a stalk of blossoms from the brilliant wild flower, called the cardinal. Unseen by him, the fairy Touchu circled round his head, and waved her lily stamen, from which the fine gold coloured dust fell on his hair in a fragrant shower. In the greensward below, two beautiful yellow birds sat among the catnip blossoms, picking the seed while they rocked gracefully on the wind stirred plant. Ernest smiled as he said to himself, 'Gone are the dandelion blossoms, which strewed my grass carpet with golden stars, and now come these winged flowers to refresh the eye. When they are gone to warmer climes; then will the yellow butterflies come in pairs; and whenever they are gone, here in my oboe sleep the soft yellow tones ever ready to wake and cheer me with their childlike gladness.'

He took up the instrument as he spoke, and played a slight flourish. A little bird that nestled among the leaves of a cherry tree, near by, caught the tones of the oboe and mocked it with a joyous trill, a little sunny shower of sound. Then sprang the post to his feet, and his countenance lighted up as a transfigured one; but a slight cloud soon floated over that radiant expression. 'Ah, if thou wert not afraid of me,' he said, 'if thou would'st come, dear little warbler, and perch on my oboe, and sing a duet with me, how happy I should be! Why are man and nature thus sundered?'

Another little bird in the althea bush answered him in low sweet notes, ending ever with the plaintive cadence of a minor third. The deep, tender eyes of the man-child filled with tears. 'We are not sundered,' thought he. 'Surely my heart is in harmony with nature, for she responds to my inmost thought, as one instrument vibrates the tones of another to which it is perfectly attuned. Blessed, blessed is nature in its soothing power!'

As he spoke, Touchu came floating on a zephyr, and poured over him the fragrance of the trignonette she had gathered in the garden below.

At the same hour, Alfred walked in his conservatory among groves of fragrant geraniums and richly flowering cacti. He smoked a cigar and glanced listlessly from his embroidered slippers to the marble pavement, without taking notice to the costly flowers. The Gardener who was watering a group of japonicas, remarked, 'This is a fine specimen that has opened to day. Will you have the goodness to look at it, Sir?' He passed in his walk a moment, and looked at a pure white blossom, with the faintest roseate blush in its centre. 'It ought to be handsome,' said he, 'the price was high enough. But all the money I expended, horticulturalists declare that Mr Duncan's Japonicas excel mine. It's provoking to be outdone.' The old gnome stood behind one of the plants and shrugged his shoulders, and grinned. Without perceiving his presence, Alfred muttered to himself, 'Utouch promised my flowers should be unequalled in rarity and beauty.'

'This was last year,' croaked a small voice which he at once recognised.

'Last year!' retorted Alfred, mocking his tone. 'Am I then to be always toiling after what I never keep? That's precious comfort you provoking imp.'

A retreating laugh was heard under the pavement, as the rich man threw his cigar away, exclaiming impatiently, 'What do I care about the japonicas; they're not worth fretting about.'

Weeks passed, and brought the returning seventh day of rest. The little child who made rainbows flicker over the father's poem, lay very ill, and the anxious parents feared that this beautiful vision of innocence might soon pass away from the earth. The shadows of a Maderia vine, now and then waved across the window, and the chamber was filled with the delicate perfume of its blossoms.

No sound broke the Sabbath stillness, except the little bird in the althea bush, whose tones were sad as the voice of memory. The child heard it, and sighed unconsciously, as he put his little feverish hand within his mother's, and said, 'Please sing me a hymn, dear mother.' With a soft clear voice, subdued by her depth of feeling, she sang Schubert's Ave Maria. Manifold and wonderful are the intertwining influences in the world of spirits! What was it that touched the little bird's heart, and uttered in such plaintive cadences? They made the child sigh for a hymn; and bird and child together woke Schubert's prayerful echoes in the mother's bosom. And now from the soul of the composer, in that far off German land, the spirit of devotion comes to the father, wafted on the wings of that beautiful music. Ernest bowed his head reverently, and sank kneeling by

the bedside. While he listened thus, Touchu glided softly into his bosom and laid her wand upon his heart. When the sweet, beseeching melody had ceased, Ernest pressed the hand of the singer to his lips, and remained awhile in silence. Then the strong necessity of supplication came over him, and he poured forth an earnest prayer. With fervid eloquence, he implored for themselves an humble and resigned spirit for their little one, that, living or dying, good angels might ever carry him in their protecting arms. As they rose up, his wife leaned her head upon his shoulder, and with tearful eyes whispered:

'God help us, this and every day.'

'To live more nearly as we pray.'

That same morning Alfred rode to church in his carriage, and a servant waited with the horses till he had performed his periodical routine of worship. Many coloured hues from the richly stained windows of the church glanced on wall and pillar, and imparted to silk and broadcloth the metallic lustre of a peacock's plumage. Gorgeous, in crimson mantle, with a topaz glory round his head, shone the meek son of Joseph the carpenter, and his humble fishermen of Galilee were resplendent in the robes of purple and gold. The fine haze of dust on which the sunbeams fell, gleamed with a quivering prismatic reflection of their splendour. From the choir descended the heavenly tones of Schubert's Ave Maria. They flowed into Alfred's ear, but no Touchu was with him to lay her wand upon his heart. To a visitor, who sat in his cushioned pew, he whispered that they had the highest price for their music, and had the best that money could command. The sermon urged the necessity of providing some religious instruction for the poor, for otherwise there could be no security to property against robbery and fire. Alfred resolved within himself to get up a subscription immediately for that purpose, and to give twice as much as Mr. Duncan, whatever the sum might be. Utouch, who secretly suggested the thing to him turned somersets on the gilded prayer-book, and twisted diabolical grimaces. But Alfred did not see him; nor did he hear a laugh under the carriage when, as they rolled home, he said to his wife—'My dear, why didn't you wear your embroidered crape shawl? I told you we were to have strangers in the pew. In so handsome a church people expect to see the congregation elegantly dressed, you know.'

But though Utouch was a mocking spirit, Alfred could not complain that he had been untrue to his bargain. He had promised to bestow anything he craved, from his kingdom of the outward. He had asked for honour in the church, influence on 'change, a rich, handsome wife, and superb horses. He had them. Whose fault was it that he was continually looking round anxiously to observe whether others had more of the goods he coveted? He had wished for a luxurious table, and it stood covered with the rarest dainties of the world. But with a constrained smile he said to his guests—'Is it not provoking to be surrounded by luxuries I cannot eat? That pie-crust would torment my sleep with a legion of nightmares. It is true I do not crave it much, for I sit at a loaded table half famished for an appetite,' as the witty Madame de Sevigne used to say. Again and again he asked himself why all the fruit that seemed so ripe and tempting on the outside was always dry and dusty within. And it he was puzzled to understand why he seemed to have all things, and yet really had nothing, still more was he puzzled to explain how Ernest seemed to have so little, and yet in reality possessed all things. One evening, at a concert, he happened to sit near Ernest and his wife while they listened to that most beautiful symphony by Spohr, called the 'Consecration of the Tones.' Delighted as children were they, when they began to hear the winds murmur through the music, the insect pipe, and one little bird after another chirp his notes of gladness. How expressively they looked at each other during the tender lulling cradle-song! and how their brightened and softened, as the enchanting tones passed through the wild allegro of the dance, into the exquisite melody of the serenade! But when cradle-song, dance, and serenade all moved forward together in delightful harmony, a three-fold chord of lovely melodies, the transparent countenance of Ernest became luminous with his inward joy. It was evident that Touchu had again laid her thrilling wand upon his heart.

'How the deuce does he contrive always to delight himself?' thought Alfred. 'I wonder whether the music really is anything uncommon.'

In order to ascertain, he turned from Ernest to watch the countenance of a musical critic near by—one of those unfortunate men who enjoy music as the proof-reader enjoys the poetry he corrects in a printing-office. How can a beautiful metaphor please him while he sees a comma topsy-turvy, or a period out of place? How can he be charmed by the melodious flow of the verse, while he is dotting an i, or looking out for an inverted s? The critic seemed less attentive to his business than the proof-reader; for he was looking round and whispering, apparently unconscious that sweet sounds filled the air. Nevertheless, Utouch whispered to Alfred that the critic was the man to inform him whether he ought to be delighted with the music or not. So at the close of the symphony he spoke to him, and took occasion to say—'I invited a French amateur to come here this evening, in hopes he would receive a favorable impression of the state of music in America. You are an excellent judge of such mat-

ters. Do you think he will be satisfied with the performance?'

'He may be pleased, sir, but not satisfied,' replied the critic. 'The composition is a very fine one, but he has doubtless heard it in Paris and until you have heard a French orchestra, sir, you can have no conception of music. Their accuracy in rhythmical time amounts to absolute perfection.'

'And do you think the orchestra have played well tonight?'

'Tolerably, well, sir. But in the cradle-song, the clarinet lagged a little once or twice; and the effect of the serenade was injured because the violoncello was tuned one sixteenth of a note too low.'

Alfred bowed, and went away, congratulating himself that he had not been more delighted than was proper.

The alleged impossibility of having any conception of music unless he went to Europe, renewed a wish he had long indulged. He closed his magnificent house, and went forth to make the fashionable tour. Ernest was a painter, as well as a poet; and it chanced that they met in Italy. Alfred seemed glad to see the friend of his childhood, but he soon turned from cheerful things, to tell how vexed he was about a statue he had purchased. 'I gave a great price for it,' said he, 'thinking it was a real antique; but good judges now assure me that it is a modern work. It is so annoying to waste one's money!'

'But if it be really beautiful, and please you, the money is not wasted,' replied Ernest; 'though it certainly is not agreeable to be cheated. Look at this ivory head to my cane! It is a bust of Hebe which I bought for a trifle yesterday. But small as is the market value, its beauty is a perpetual delight to me. If it be not an antique, it deserves to be. It troubles me that I cannot find the artist and pay him more than I gave. Perhaps he is poor, and has not yet made a name for himself; but whoever he may be, a spark of the divine fire is certainly in him. Observe the beautiful swell of the breast and the graceful turn of the head!'

'Yes, it is a pretty thing,' rejoined Alfred, half contemptuously; 'but I am too much vexed with that knave who sold me the statue, to go into raptures about the head of a cane just now. What makes it more provoking is, that Mr Duncan did purchase a real antique last year, for less money than I throw away on this modern thing.'

Having in vain tried to impart his own sunny humour, Ernest bade him adieu, and returned to his humble lodgings, out of the city. As he lingered in the orange groves, listening to nightingales, he thought to himself, 'I wish that charming little fairy who came to me in my boyish dream, would touch Alfred with her wand for the purse the old gnome gave him seems to bring him little joy.' He happened to look up at that moment, and there, close by his hand, was Touchu balancing herself tip-toe on an orange bud. She had the same luminous, loving eyes, the same prismatic robes, and the same sunny gleam on her hair. She smiled as she said, 'Then you do not repent your early choice, though I could not give you a purse full of money?'

'Oh no indeed,' replied he. 'Thou hast been the brightest blessing of my life.'

She kissed his eyes, and waving her wand over him, said affectionately, 'Take then the best gift I have to offer. When thou art an old man, thou shalt still remain to the last a simple, happy child.'

THE INDIAN CHIEF.

The following beautiful story is literally true, and was first published in a lecture delivered by William Erney, Esq., of Utica, N. Y., on the early history of Oneida County.

One of the first settlers in Western New York, was Judge W——, who established himself at Whitestown—about four miles from Utica. He brought his family with him, among whom was a widowed daughter with an only child—a fine boy about four years old. You will recollect that the country was an unbroken forest, and this was the domain of the savage tribes.

Judge W—— saw the necessity of keeping on good terms with the Indians, for as he was alone he was completely at their mercy. Accordingly he took every opportunity to assure them of his kindly feelings, and to secure their good will in return. Several of the chiefs came to see him, and all appeared pacific. But there was one thing that troubled him; an aged chief of the Oneida tribe, and one of great influence, who resided at the distance of a dozen miles, had not yet been to see him, nor could he ascertain the views and feelings of the sachem in respect to his settlement in that region. At last he sent him a message, and the answer was that the chief would visit him on the morrow.

True to his appointment the sachem came; Judge—— received him with marks of respect, and introduced his wife, his daughter and little boy. The interview that followed was interesting. Upon its result the Judge was convinced his security might depend and he was therefore exceedingly anxious of making a favourable impression upon the distinguished chief. He expressed his desire to settle in the country, to live on terms of amity and good fellowship with the Indians, and to be useful to them by introducing among them the arts of civilization.

The chief heard him out, and then said—'Brother, you ask much and you promise much. What pledge can you give of your faith? The white man's word may be good to