

POETRY.

HOAR FROST.

For every shrub, and every blade of grass,
And every pointed thorn seems wrought in glass;
In pearls and rubies rich the hawthorns show,
While through the Ice the crimson berries glow.

The thick spring reeds, the watery marshes yield,
Seem polished lances in a hostile field.
The stag in limpid currents with surprise,
Sees chrysal branches on his forehead rise.

The spreading oak, the beech, the towering pine,
Glazed over in the freezing Ether shine.
The frightened birds the rattling branches shun,
Which wave and glitter in the distant sun.

When a sudden gust of wind arise,
The brittle forest into atoms flies.
The crackling wood beneath the tempest bends,
And in a spangled shower the prospect ends.

[The following is from the ACADIAN MAGAZINE, or Literary Mirror, a periodical work now publishing in Halifax. The Proprietor seems very zealous in the undertaking he has commenced; and the ability he has already displayed, certainly evinces much promise of the future. The work is published in monthly numbers, (Price 20s. per annum) and we shall be extremely happy to attend to any orders that may be sent us for the same. The present extract may give our readers some idea of the author's taste in selecting.—Ed. N. B. R. G.]

SECRETS OF CABALISM.

ON the evening of the 29th June, 1555, in one of the narrow streets near the Poultry Compter, in London, a dark square-built ruffian, in a thrum cap and leathern jerkin, suddenly sprung forth from his hiding place, and struck his dagger with all his force against the breast of a man passing by. "By my holidam," said the man, "that would have craved no thanks, if my coat hardy had been thinner—but thou shalt have a jape for thy leman to know thee by"—and flourishing a short gis-arme, or double pointed weapon, on his left hand, with his right on which he seemed to wear an iron glove, he stamped a sufficient mark on the assassin's face and vanished in a moment.

"Why thou, Lozel!" said another ruffian starting from beneath a pent house, "wast playing at barley-bread with a wooden knife? Thou wilt hardly earn twenty pounds this bout."

"A plague on his cloak, Coniers! he must have had a Gombas under it. Thou mayest earn the coin thyself; thou has gotten a gold ring and twenty shillings in part payment."

"Get thee gone to thy needle and baudekin again, like a woman's tailor as thou art! thou hast struck the wrong man and he hast taken away thy nose that he might swear to the right one. That last quart of buff-cap made froth of thy brains."

"My basilard is sharp enough for thee I warrant," muttered his disappointed companion as he drew his tough hyke or cloak over his bruises and slunk into a darker alley. Meanwhile the object of their discourse and of their villany strode with increased haste towards the Compter prison and enquired for the condemned prisoner John Bradford. The keeper knew Bishop Gardiner's secretary, and admitted him without hesitation, hoping that he brought terms of grace to the pious man, whose meek demeanour in the prison had won love from all about him. The secretary found him on his knees, as his custom was, eating his spare meal in that humble posture, and meditating with his hat drawn over his face. He rose to receive his visitor, and his tall slender person, held gracefully erect, aided a countenance which derived from a faint bloom and a beard of rich brown, an expression of youthful beauty, such as a painter would not have deemed unworthy of the great giver of the creed for which he suffered; Gardiner's secretary uncovered his head, and bending it humbly, kissed his hand with tears. "Be of good comfort,

brother," said Bradford, "I have done nothing in this realm except in godly quietness, unless at Paul's cross, where I bestirred myself to save him who is now Bishop of Bath, when his rash sermon provoked the multitude."

"Ah, Bradford! Bradford!" replied his visitor, "thou didst save him who will burn thee. Had it not been for thee, I had run him through with my sword that day!" Bradford started back and looked earnestly,—"I know thy voice now, and I remember that voice said those same words in my ear when the turmoil was at St. Paul's cross. For what comest thou now? A man of blood is not fit company for a sinner going to die."

"Not while I live, my most dear tutor, I am Rufford of Edlesburgh."

The old man threw his arms around his neck, and hung on it for an instant:—"It is twelve years since I saw thee, and my heart grieved when I heard a voice like thine in the fierce riot at Paul's Cross. Art thou here bodily, or do I only dream? There is a rumour abroad, that thy old enemy, Coniers, slew thee at Huntingdon last year."

"He meant well, John Bradford; but I had a thick quilted pourpoint and a tough leathern cap:—I have met his minions more than once, and they knew what prim my hand leaves. Enough of this. I am not in England now as Giles Rufford; I shall do thee better service as what I seem."

"Seeming was never good service," said the divine: "what hast thou to do with me, who am in God's hands?"

"He makes medicines of apes and vipers," answered his pupil,—"I shall serve him if I save his minister, though it be by subtlety. I have crept into Gardiner's favor by my skill in strange tongues and Hebrew secrets, therefore I am now his secretary; and I have an ally in the very chamber of our queen-mistress."

"That woman is not unwise or unmerciful," replied Bradford, "in things that touch not her faith; but I will be helped by no unfair practice on her. Mercy with God's mercy will be welcome; but I am readier to die than to be his forsworn servant."

"Master, there can be no evil in gathering the fruit Providence has ripened for us. Gardiner was Wolsey's disciple once, and hath more heathen learning in him than Catholic zeal. There is a leaven left of his old studies which will work us good. He believes in the Cabalism of the Jews, and reads strange books from Pedia and Antwerp, which tell him of lucky and unlucky days. He shall be made to think to-morrow full of evil omens, and his superstition shall shake his cruelty."

"Thou art but a green youth still," rejoined Bradford, "if thou knowest not that cruelty is superstition's child. Take heed that his heathenish witchcraft doth not shake both thy wit and thy safety. For though I sleep but little, and have few dreams of earthly things, there came, as I think, a vision raised by no holy art, into my prison last night. And it had such a touch of Heaven's beauty in its face, and such rare music in its voice, that it well nigh tempted me to believe its promise. But I remembered my frailty, and was safe."

The Secretary's eyes shone brightly, and half a smile opened his lips. But he lowered both his eyes and voice as he replied "What did this fair vision promise?"

"Safety and release, if I would trust her and be pledged to obey her." There was a long pause before the young man spoke again. "Do you not remember, my foster-father, the wild laurel trees that grew near my birth place? An astrologer at Pisa told me it should not wither till the day of my death. And it seems

to me, when I have walked under its shade, that the leaves made strange music, as if a spirit had touched them. It is greener and richer than its neighbours, and the fountain that flows near its root have, as men believe, a rare power of healing. The dreams that visit me when I sleep near it are always the visiting of a courteous and lovely spirit. What if the legends of Greece and Syria speak truth? May we not both have guardian spirits that choose earthly shapes?"

"My son," replied Bradford, "these thoughts are the diamond-drops that lie on the young roses of life. But the sun of Truth and Reason should disperse them. Man has one guardian, and he needs no more unless he forgets that One. Thou wast called in thy youth the silken pleader, because thy words were like soft threads spun into a rich tissue. Be wary lest they entangle thee, and become a snare instead of a banner fit to guide christians. I am a blighted tree marked for the fire, and thou canst not save me by searching the freshness of thy young laurel for my sake."

"I will shame the astrologer to-morrow," said his pupil, "and therefore I must make this hour brief. She who rules the Queen's secrets has had a bribe to make Mary merciful. There is hope of a birth at court, and death ought not to be busy. Fare ye well! but do not distrust that fair apparition if it should open these prison-doors to-morrow." So saying, the young man departed without heeding Bradford's monitory gesture.

Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester and high chancellor by Queen Mary's favour, sat that night alone and thoughtful in his closet. He had been the chief commissioner appointed to preside at Bradford's trial; and though he had eagerly urged his colleagues to condemn him, he secretly abhorred the time-serving cruelty of Bishop Bonner, and the cowardice of Bourne, who had not dared to save the life of the benefactor he had once begged to save his own. "You have tarried late," said Gardiner, as his secretary entered—"the stars are waning, and their intelligence will be imperfect."

"I traced it before midnight," replied the secretary, "but I needed the help of your lordship's science."

"It is strange," said the patron, leaning thoughtfully on one of Roger Bacon's volumes, "that men in every age and climate, and of every creed, have this appetite for an useless knowledge; and it would be stranger, if both profane and sacred history did not show us that such knowledge hath been sometimes granted, though in vain. What is that paper in thy hand?"

"It is a clumsy calculation, my lord, of this night's aspect. I learned in Araby, as your lordship knows, some small guesses at Chaldean astrology; but I deem the characters and engraved signs of the Hermetic men more powerful in arresting the intelligent bodies in the heavens.—They were the symbols used by Pythagoras and Zoroaster, and their great master Apollonius."

"Ignatius Loyola and Athanasius Kicher did not disdain them," replied the bishop, crossing himself—"but what was the fruit of thy calculation?"

"Nothing," answered his secretary, humbly—"nothing, at least, not already known to one more able than myself. The first of July is a day of evil omen, and the last day of June has a doubtful influence. My intelligence says, if life is taken on that day, a mitre will be among ashes."

"Hermes Trismegistus, founder of this sect in Egypt, is said to have lived in the year 2076, in the reign of Ninus after Moses. The Roricucians, a similar sect, appeared in Germany in the beginning of the seventeenth century, calling themselves the enlightened, immortal, and invisible.

"Hah!—and the heretics will think it if Bradford dies—for they are wont to say, he is wiser than a bishopric than we of a Parish priesthood.—Thou hast not yet told all."

"My lord, I see the rest dimly.—There are symbols of a falling star and a flame quenched with blood. They tell of a gorgeous funeral soon."

Gardiner was silent several minutes before he raised his head. "Thou knowest, Ravenstone that I was like the Jesuit Loyola, a student of earthly things, and a servant in profane wars, before I took the cross. Therefore I sinned against much of the heathen and Egyptian superstition.—But that is not my secret. I have seen it may be, such a one in a dream last night. He thought there stood by me in my oratory a woman of queenlike stature and strange beauty. She showed me, as it were beyond a mist, a green tree growing near a fountain, and the star that shone on that fountain was the brightest in the sky; but presently the tree grew wide and broad, and the light of the star set behind it. Then I saw in my cathedral at Winchester my own effigies on a tomb, but all the inscription was effaced and broken except the date, and I read 'the first day of July.'—Is it not strange, Ravenstone, that a dream should so well tally with my planetary reckoning? Yet I was once told by a witch-woman, that the bishop of Winchester should preach our queen's funeral-sermon."

"So he may my lord," said the Secretary, who called himself Ravenstone—"but there may be a White bishop of Winchester."

"Ah! I trow thy meaning;—White is a shrewd churchman, and looks for my place. Harken to me, then—I have a thought that evil is gathering against me to-night:—to profit by my dream, I will go privily from London within this hour, and abide in secret at Winchester till the ides of June are past. But take thou my signet-ring and put my seal and countersign to Bradford's death-warrant when it comes from court."

"Does my lord think it will be sent?" said the secretary, calmly—"They say the queen's bed-chamber-woman has told her, she will be the mother of no living thing if she harms ought that has life."

"Tush!—that woman is a crafty gilet; but we need such helps when a queen reigns. It was well done, Ravenstone, to promise her Giles Rufford's lands. Since the man is dead, and his heir murdered him, we will make Alice of Huntingdon his heiress."

Not a muscle in the pretended Ravenstone's face changed, and his deep black eye was steady as he replied—"It will be well done, my lord, if she is faithful. At what hour is John Bradford to die?"

"Bid the marshal of the prison have a care of him till four o'clock to-morrow, for he is a gay and glorious talker—and so was his namesake, mad John* of Munster, even among red hot irons. Look to the warrant, Ravenstone, and see it speedily sent to Newgate. That done—my, come nearer—I would speak in thine ear. There is a coffer in my private chamber which I have left unlocked. Attach my signet-ring to the silver chain, and let me know what thou shalt hear;—but let this be done in the very noon of night, when no eye or ear but thine own can reach it."

Ravenstone promised, and his hand trembled with joy as he received the ring. It was already almost midnight, and Gardiner, as he stole out of his house, stopped to look at the moon's rainbow, then deemed a rare and awful omen. "Alice of Huntingdon is busy," he said with a ghastly smile—"but the dead man's land will be free enough for the blue-eyed witch—she cannot buy a husband without it"—And stealing a look at Ravenstone, the chancellor-bishop departed.

(To be concluded in our next.)

*John of Leyden, a butcher, and afterwards a furious mystagogue, was cruelly executed at Munster, in 1533.

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