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"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men"

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THE TWO ANGELS.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

Two angels—one of Life and one of Death—
Pass'd o'er the village as the morning broke;
The dawn was on their faces, and beneath,
The sombre houses hearsed with plumes of
sn.oke.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,
Alike their features and their robes of white;
But one was crowned with amaranth as with flame,
And one with asphodels, like flakes of light.

I saw them pause on their celestial way;
Then said I, with deep fear and doubt op-
press'd,
"Beat not so loud, my heart, lest thou betray
The place where thy beloved are at rest."

And he who wore the crown of asphodels,
Descending at my door, began to knock,—
And my soul sank within me, as in wells,
The waters sink before an earthquake's shock.

I recognized the nameless agony,
The terror, and the tremor and the pain,
That oft before had filled and haunted me,
And now returned with three-fold strength
again.

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,
And listen'd, for I thought I heard God's voice;
And knowing whatso'er he sent was best,
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.

Then with a smile that fill'd the house with light,
"My errand is not Death, but Life," he said;
And ere I answer'd, passing out of sight,
On his celestial embassy he sped.

'Twas at thy door, O friend! and not at mine,
The angel with the amaranthine wreath
Pausing descended, and with a voice divine,
Whisper'd a word that had a sound like death.

Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features fair and thin;
And softly, from that hush'd and darken'd room,
Two angels issued, where but one went in.

All is of God! If he but wave his hand
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,
Till with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo! he looks back from the departing cloud.

Angels of Life and Death alike are his:
Without his leave they pass no threshold o'er;
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this
Against his Messengers to shut the door?

[Written for the Visitor.]

RUSSIA.

BY A. H. MUNRO.

Early in the year 1690, there died at the village of Ringen, near Dorpat, in Livonia, a young peasantess who had been far more famed for her beauty than for her discretion. About three years before her death she had increased the sum total of the human family by the addition of an item of her own sex destined to be a prominent actor in a strange and varied drama. Count Rosen, the lord of Ringen, with whom both mother and child had resided, died soon after the former, whose little orphan was thus thrown for protection and support, upon the tender sympathies of the benevolent. For a time a home was found for her beneath the roof of the clerk of the village. But not long after a Lutheran clergyman of the name of Guck, happening to pass through Ringen, saw the child and being struck by her unusual beauty made enquiries respecting her. So strongly was he heart moved by the pitiful history of this forlorn but attractive little wof, that he took her to his own home at Marienburg, where she grew up among his children, apparently, as loved and happy as themselves.

Eleven years after, the dwelling of the Lutheran clergyman resounded with the mirth of bridal festivities. The orphan girl, though but fourteen years of age, was about to become

the wife of a dragoon of the Marienburg garrison. The ceremony was finished and the congratulations of the company were being expressed, when a peremptory summons called the bridegroom to immediately join his troop, then under marching orders for Riga, which place the Russians were attacking. He obey'd the mandate and next morning his orphan bride was a widow.

A few days after Marienburg itself was taken by the Russians under general Bauer. As that officer rode through the town at the head of his forces, he saw the fair subject of this narrative standing at a door, gazing at the troops as they past. At his earliest leisure he sent for her. Whether she obeyed his command or accepted his invitation must remain undecided, but at his request she left her home she had so long enjoyed—and never returned to it. The union of her fortune with those of general Bauer, was not of long continuance, but was soon abandoned in favour of a more brilliant though in other respects similar alliance with Prince Menschikoff. In his company she was seen by Peter the Great, to whom she was readily induced to transfer herself. She commenced living with him in 1704. SEVEN YEARS AFTER THEY WERE MARRIED. The rite on that occasion was performed in secret, but in 1712 it was publicly repeated in St. Petersburg. The orphan girl then took the name of Catherine and the title of Czarina. We omit the next thirteen years of her history. Let us imagine our lives in St. Petersburg in the year 1725, the year in which Peter died. The news of that event has reached every home and fireside of the capital. And mournings genuine, or feigned, and rejoicings secret or avowed, one thought is in every breast—Who is to fill the vacant throne? We go to the place where the answer to that question is about to be given—the newly erected palace. It is surrounded by an immense multitude of people, kept off from the building by several regiments of guards, with drums beating and colours flying. In one of its gorgeous saloons sits Catherine, by her side is Menschikoff, her wily and steadfast friend. Perilous and delicate is the game he has to play, but he is equal to the task. The room is crowded by members of the senate, the nobles, clergy and officers of high rank. Silence is broken by Menschikoff's rising and enquiring of the Imperial Secretary if Peter had left any will. To this it is replied, that the late Emperor had made a will but destroyed it before going to Moscow, trusting that his people knowing his wishes, would obey them. The answer of the Secretary is followed by murmuring which soon breaks out into noisy altercation all over the apartment. Many of the nobles being bitterly opposed to Catherine, stoutly deny what others as strenuously affirm—that Peter desired her to be his successor. During a momentary lull in the storm, the Archbishop of Plescoff rises and earnestly calls upon the clergy and nobility to remember the oath which they had all taken in 1722 to acknowledge the successor appointed by Peter. Several voices ask "whom did he appoint?" "Catherine" is the prelate's unhesitating reply. Loud and numerous demurs follow, but silence being sufficiently restored, the Archbishop relates, that Peter had stated in the house of an English merchant that he had placed the crown on Catherine's head solely that she might be his successor. Several others confirming this, Menschikoff exclaims "what need have we of further testimony? A refusal to comply with the wishes of our great sovereign would be unjust and criminal. "Long live the Empress Catherine." And suiting the action to the word he kneels and kisses her hand. Many others repeat his exclamations and deed of homage. The scene become exciting, and carried away by the influences of the moment, all present kneel to the royal widow, while

the shouts of "Long live Catherine" are caught up by the soldiers without and enthusiastically repeated by them and the people, as Menschikoff leads Catherine to the window and scatters handfuls of money to those beneath, who with frantic delight proclaim the orphan girl Empress of all the Russians.

Catherine did not reign long, if indeed it can be said that she reigned at all, for she resigned the government almost entirely into the hands of Menschikoff, to whom she owed so much for his adroit management. When she interfered with his administration, she evinced a clear head and a kind heart. But there eulogy must stop. Her premature death was occasioned by complicated diseases which her gross sensuality and intemperance had created, and which rendered the once fascinating woman an unwieldy mass, a burthen to herself and loathsome to others. Thus, amid royal splendour, and in the possession of absolute rule over millions, and endowed with natural vigor of intellect and generosity of disposition, as well as remarkable personal graces, passed away unregretted and unrespected this miserable victim of unrestrained passions

Bridge over the St. Lawrence.

The Victoria Bridge over the St. Lawrence will certainly be the most remarkable work of the kind in the Canadas, we might say in the whole world. It reminds us of some of the old Roman works, such as the ancient aqueducts which span the valleys of Italy, in their grand and gigantic proportions, more than of an ordinary bridge over a river. We know of nothing on the continent of America, nothing on the continent of Europe, which approaches this work in the grandeur and greatness of its design.

The success of the Engineer (Mr. Stevenson,) in the building of the Britannia Bridge has fully justified him in deciding upon the adoption of the same plan for the Victoria Bridge, which will be constructed on twenty-four piers, with spans or spaces, for the navigation exclusive of the two abutments from whence the tubes spring on either side. The centre space or span will be 330 feet wide, and each of the other twenty-four spans will be 220 feet wide. The width of the two piers nearest to each abutment will be 15 feet, and as the piers approach the centre span, the width and strength of each will be increased until they reach the two centre piers, when it will amount to 18 feet.

The abutments from which the tubes spring will be each of them 242 feet long and 90 feet wide, and from the north shore of the St. Lawrence to the north abutment there will be a solid stone embankment of rough masonry, 1,200 feet in length, raised like an artificial rock to resist the current. The stone embankment leading from the south shore of the river to the south abutment will be half this length, or 600. The length of the bridge itself, from abutment to abutment, and its total length from river bank to river bank, will be 10,284 feet, or about 50 yards less than two English miles.

The summer average depth of the St. Lawrence, varies from 14 feet near the centre, to 4 feet near the banks, and the current runs in this part, at the rate of from seven to ten miles an hour. The clear distance between the under surface of the centre tube, and the average summer level of the river is to be 60 feet, and the height will diminish towards either side with a grade at the rate of 1 in 130 or 140 feet in the mile; so that at the outer or river edge of each abutment the height will be 35 feet above the summer level.

On the 24th of July last the first stone in the bed of the river was raised for the construction of the first pier of the bridge, and now, on the 14th September, "Pier No. 1" has arisen several feet above the level of the

river, and the process of binding the blocks may be seen and understood. Each stone of the structure is clamped to its fellow by bands of iron, and the interstices are filled with molten lead, and the strongest Roman cement. The result will be, the construction of masonry as durable as that of the Coliseum or the Appian Ways, which have withstood the wear and tear of time and of traffic for more than 2,000 years, and which will continue to exist as monuments of the skill and industry of man.

Unless unforeseen difficulties arise, the first railway train will pass over the broad St. Lawrence by the summer of 1858. The commercial advantages will consist in the fact, that the Victoria Bridge will bring into direct communication, without break of gauge or bulk, the exhaustless products of Canada West, and of Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and all the Western States of the Union. Reciprocity will have opened the door to international communication, and the requirements of traffic will be cheaply and expeditiously met by the iron road, and its tubular bridge. A few years hence, and this very bridge will become one of the greatest attractions to the tourist and the traveller.

The Colossus of Rhodes, under which the pigmy shallops of former ages could pass, was esteemed one of the wonders of the Old World. But an iron bridge, spanning a river two miles in width, giving safe passage to the hundreds of tons of weight between its iron sides, and permitting ships of the largest tonnage to pass beneath its elevated arches, is an achievement still more remarkable for the New World, and is worthy of the young Giant rising in the West. If the Coliseum, and the Pantheon, and the Piræus, and the Pyramids, have attracted visitors from every land, so in future days will the Victoria Bridge; and Montreal will hereafter reap much of the benefit which must follow the completion of so mighty a work.—*Montreal Pilot.*

Thrilling Incident.

We gather from rumor the following facts in which we have been greatly interested:—

A few days since, Mr. Davenport, of Shelbyville, Tenn., went down into a well which he was engaged in digging, and the negro who remained at the mouth of the well became alarmed at his groans, and ran to the street, crying out that a man was dying in the well. A young gentleman chanced to be passing at the moment and instantly ran to the well, pulled off his coat, and climbed down by the curbing till within about ten feet of the bottom, when he encountered the stream of poisonous air which had broken into the well, and finding he was likely to fall, jumped to the ground. He found Mr. Davenport apparently dead, and immediately made a rope or chain fast around the lifeless body which was drawn up by people who had assembled at the well. Scarcely had he done this, however, when he became unconscious and sank to the ground. Those about the mouth of the well finding that the body drawn up though seemingly dead, showed some faint signs of remaining vitality, were busily engaged in endeavouring to restore the suspended animation, forgetting for the time that some one had gone into the well, and it was not till physicians had been sent for, and several had arrived with a crowd of the citizens, and the first object of their anxiety had begun to breathe again, that they reminded (probably by the negro) that a young man, a stranger, had gone down to rescue this man, and was now, doubtless, a corpse in the bottom of the well. What could be done? Who was there brave enough now that the danger was fully known, to venture into the very jaws of death? They let down a light, but it was instantly extinguished. They threw burning shavings, but they only