

LAYS OF LABOR.

BY PETER PEPPERCORN.

From the early dawn of morning
Till the closing of the day,
Helping to enrich another,
Tolling hard for little pay;
Living in a pent-up alley
On the coarsest kind of food,
While the rich man lives in luxury;
Is this human brotherhood?

Better far to be a savage,
In the desert roaming free,
Than to live a life degraded,
And a mere machine to be
"But," cry preachers, "be contented,
It is only for your good,
Man was made to toil and suffer"—
Is this human brotherhood?

Vain it is to talk of freedom,
Whilst distinctions thus remain,
Slaves of wealth are slaves as truly
As the slave that wears the chain.
Though God's earth was made for all men,
Owning not a single rood,
Robbed of all and blamed for tolling,
Is this human brotherhood?

Arouse yourselves, ye tolling millions!
Join together in your might,
Cast off sleep—be up and doing,
If you would obtain your right,
And oppression sweep before you,
Like the torrent of a flood.
Be your watchword truth and justice—
Universal brotherhood.

THE STORY OF COELIO.

Philip II., King of Spain, like many other powerful monarchs, loved to lay aside the insignia of royalty, and following the example of Caliph Haroun al Raschid, roam the streets of his capital of a night, accompanied by a faithful servant in disguise. He was thus often enabled to discover himself causes of popular discontent, trammels of conspiracies, or wishes for reform; also to perform many acts of munificence towards the poor and meritorious.

In the year 1549 Philip paid a visit to the capital of the Netherlands, Brussels, where he resided some time, and was entertained in a manner which recalled the magnificence of the days of chivalry. He was still the idol of his people, who hoped that the son of Charles V., by treading in the footsteps of his illustrious father, would continue towards them the favors and wise policy which had rendered both Spain and the rest of the empire so unusually flourishing. How Philip responded to these expectations belongs to history. I will only mention that at the period of the action of this story he was in the zenith of his popularity.

One night, when the ceremonies of the court were over, Philip summoned his faithful servant, Ruy Gomez. Masking his face with a long gray beard, and enveloped in a great Spanish cloak, he and his attendant went forth into the dark streets of Brussels in quest of adventure.

They had not proceeded far in the direction of the river, when their attention was drawn to a person hurrying with rapid but uncertain steps to the bridge. By his excited gestures the King concluded that he was some unfortunate creature driven by despair to seek a watery grave. He therefore hastened after him, and, together with Gomez, arrived just in time to prevent his leaping over the parapet into the river.

"Stop! for God's sake, stop!" cried Philip II.

"Who may you be? Let me alone, I say! My life's my own, and I suppose I may do as I choose with it."

"That you may not. It belongs to God, who gave it. He alone may take it."

"Wherefore then does He not provide me the wherewithal to sustain it? He feeds the vermin, but leaves man so dependent that he may die of starvation, as I am doing. Unhand me! I say, unhand me!" The desperate man sought for his rapier, but it was gone.

"What misfortune has driven you to this rash extremity?" asked the King.

"Sir, this is my misfortune, and may it never be yours—I have not tasted food for two days."

"Alas! poor youth!" He was a tall, lank young man, who, had he been properly fed and clothed, would have been remarkably handsome. His bony frame was elegantly built, slender and graceful, yet strong. His eyes were black and fiery, his brow broad and intellectual, his features regular, but at present much marred by their extreme meagreness. The expression of his countenance, under favorable circumstances, would have been open and engaging; but misery had stamped it with a haggard,

careworn look, piteous to behold. The King of Spain, putting his hand firmly on the young man's shoulder, again sighed, "Alas! poor boy!"

"Don't stand there sighing and looking at me. In the name of the saints in heaven, can you give me food—food and employment? If not, let me end my miseries."

"Young man, look into my face, See! does it look careworn?"

"Very much so."

"Well, young sir, when you have gone through as much of agony as myself, then may you think of leaving this world in search of another, where, as just punishment for your crime, a worse fate awaits you in eternity. Who are you? Whence came you? Above all"—here Philip searched for the tiny crucifix that hung from the rosary he wore round his wrist—"are you a Catholic?"

"Who dares to question it?" exclaimed the young man haughtily. "I am."

"You are a gentleman?" again questioned the King.

"By my patron saint, I am, sir—as true a gentleman as ever wore a sword."

"Gentleman or not, you are a Christian. Come, follow me and I will give you some supper, and a bed for the night. To-morrow we," continued King Philip—(who, accustomed as a sovereign to speak in the first person plural, had difficulty to adopt the first person singular in his disguise)—"that is, I will further question you as to what you can do to earn your livelihood for the future. There, Gomez, lead the way."

Holding the rescued youth by the hand firmly, lest he should escape, Philip, preceded by Ruy Gomez, bent his steps towards the palace.

On his way curiosity—one of the strongest passions of this great sovereign, got the better of his charity; and notwithstanding the young man was so weak as to render his answers almost inaudible, the King obtained from him the outline of his history. He was, he said, one Alfonso Sanchez Coelio, a native of Portugal, and a portrait painter by profession. He had been driven from Spain by order of the Marquis Don Louis de Mariavalle, Governor of Badajos, for the crime of falling in love with his excellency's daughter, Donna Estafania, in whose company he had been much thrown during a considerable time employed in the execution of her picture. He had wandered to the Netherlands in the hope of obtaining work. But, although he had done all in his power to earn his bread, he had in every case failed, and for two days had not tasted food. He was too proud to beg, and, maddened by want, had sought to free himself of his miseries by a violent death.

The King provided Coelio, as he promised, with a substantial meal and a good bed; and the next morning he awoke, much refreshed, to find Ruy Gomez by his couch, holding in his hand a handsome suit of clothes for his service. Vainly did he question the shrewd Ruy as to the condition of his unknown benefactor. Ruy informed him that the gentleman was named Don Paez, that he was in the service of his Catholic Majesty; and that presently, when he had finished his collation, the Senor Don Paez would come to him and talk of his prospects for the future. Accordingly, when Sanchez Coelio had dispatched an excellent breakfast, the King, still wearing his disguise, entered.

The first impulse of the grateful young man was to raise the hand of the supposed venerable Don Paez to his lips and thank him for his kindness, above all for having prevented his committing so fatal a crime as suicide. Don Paez listened to him with kindness.

"Young gentleman, we—that is, I—am convinced that the fearful act which you contemplated last night was the result of famine, which had deprived you of your reason. As we have taken some interest in you, and are desirous of providing for your future, we—that is, I—am willing, since you say you are a painter of portraits, that you should take a likeness of myself; but on one condition—that it be finished by the feast day of our daughter Maria. It wants one month to the holy day of our Lady Mary of Mount Carmel. We intend this picture as a present to our—my—daughter. Can you paint so rapidly?"

"I can, sir."

My servant will pay you two hundred ducats in advance for the said picture. He will also escort you to a lodging I have prepared for you, and to which I will repair for the sittings for my picture. I am, as you have doubtlessly discovered, employed about the person of his most Catholic Majesty,

and our sovereign often passes through these apartments. As he objects to the scent of paint, oil, and turpentine, I think it more becoming that my portrait be painted without the palace. As I am in service about the King's person in the day, I can only come to you at night. Can you paint by lamplight.

"I can, sir."

"Above all things, mention to no one, I beseech you, that we—that is, that I am having my portrait painted. Mention my name to no one. Guard your tongue, and never come to the palace to inquire for me—I object to persons coming here on business. If you require anything, ask it of Ruy Gomez. He has orders to serve you in all things. To-night at nine o'clock I will be with you. Farewell!"

Before Coelio could answer the disguised King had disappeared. Ruy Gomez escorted the painter to a spacious apartment situated in a remote part of the city. There he discovered painting materials—canvas, easels, pencils, and colors ready prepared for his use. That night, and for many nights following, Philip arrived punctually at nine o'clock. If detained over night, he came very early in the morning. The portrait was executed with such finish and fine coloring that the King, who was a good judge of art, pronounced it a masterpiece. About a week before it was finished Philip informed his new protegee that he had mentioned him to his Catholic Majesty, who appointed the following day, at noon, for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the new artist, and also to fix an hour for sitting for a portrait for his royal self. I will not venture to describe the feelings of joy with which Coelio heard this news, or his vision of future glory, culminating in a brilliant marriage with Donna Estafania.

Punctually at the stroke of mid-day, Coelio found himself, with beating heart, in the presence of the King of Spain. It would have been impossible for him to have recognized the aged Don Paez in the stately sovereign who stood before him. Philip was at this time in the bloom of youth, as Titian has presented him to us. So slenderly, yet so well proportioned, that although he was not above the middle height, he appeared tall. His hair and beard were exceedingly fair, his brow broad and intellectual, his eyes blue, clear, and penetrating, and his expression majestic and commanding. He wore a suit of black velvet slashed with satin, and upon his head a black cap with feathers. Beneath his ruff of fine lace hung upon his breast the gorgeous collar of the Fleece of Gold.

"Sanchez Coelio," he said, in a somewhat stern tone, "we hear from our good servant, Don Paez, that you are an artist of some skill. It is our purpose that you paint our portrait."

"Your Majesty," said Coelio, bowing very low.

"Silence! interrupt us not. This picture must be finished by the day of St. Philip, our holy patron. There wants three weeks to the time."

"Your Majesty," again broke in Coelio.

"Speak not until we have had our say. We intend to be painted in the character of our holy patron," said Philip, and will take our first sitting this very day. What is it you would say to us?"

"This much, your Majesty, and no more. I cannot undertake the task to paint your Majesty's picture by St. Philip's day, because I cannot begin it at least for a week, although it is the greatest honor and ambition of my life to serve your Majesty in this matter."

"Our servant, Don Paez, assures us that you can paint with marvelous rapidity."

"Save your Majesty!—I have promised to finish the likeness of the Senor Don Paez by the festival of his daughter. He saved my life, and has paid me in advance on condition it is finished by that day. I have given him my promise; and I must fulfil it."

"Sir Coelio!" said the King, assuming a terrible aspect, "know that we have some reason to suspect that you are an impostor, and have deceived our most worthy servant Paez. There are those within who know you better than you think for."

"Let them appear!" exclaimed Sanchez Coelio, with an impetuous indignation—"let them appear! I do not fear them, whoever they may be. Never has a lie passed my lips; never have I committed an action for which I need blush—never but once, and then I was driven by want and misery to seek to free myself from a life which had become an intolerable burden. I impose upon him? No! I would die first. Bring forward those who know me better than I think for, and then, King Philip, truth shall put calumny to the blush."

The King struck three times heavily upon the floor with his sword. Suddenly the door opened, and who should appear before the astonished Sanchez Coelio but the Marquis of Mariavalle, leading in Donna Estafania!

The young lover stood like one under a spell. Presently he opened wide his arms, and folded them again, pressing the beautiful and faithful Estafania to his heart. He led her to the King, who, drawing from beneath his cloak the gray beard and locks of his disguise, held them up before the astonished painter.

"Philip of Spain and Don Paez are one and the same. May Sanchez Coelio, whom Don Paez had learned to love, be ever true to Philip. Marquis of Mariavalle, we ask of you the hand of your daughter, Donna Estafania, for our court-painter and beloved friend Don Alfonso Sanchez de Coelio."

"That which the King asks a subject may not deny," answered the old courtier, bowing low before his sovereign.

"God bless you! Sanchez," said Philip, as he placed the hand of Estafania in that of Coelio. "May you both be as happy as I"—here he lowered his voice—"as I am wretched!"

THE WELL THAT LEAKED.

When the general manager of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad was pushing that great enterprise southward, at the rate of three miles a day, he came across a veteran Missouri farmer, who, for fifty years had lived on his frontier plantation undisturbed, even by wars, pestilence and famine, so far from disease and telegraph was he.

One night the advance men came upon his farm-house; when the following dialogue ensued:

"Then ye re gwine to build a railroad, are ye?"

"Yes."

"Whar am it comin' from, an' whar am it gwine to go?"

"From Sedalia, in Missouri, down through Missouri, Kansas, the Indian Territory and so on through Texas, to the city of Mexico."

"Are ye gwine to run it through my plantation?"

"Yes."

"Do ye hear that, old woman? We've got to move!"

"Not necessarily. All we want is the right of way."

"You can have that air; but who'd o' thought a railroad would ever hit us?"

"You've got a good farm here?"

"Yes—fair to middlin'."

"How many acres?"

"About four thousand."

"Not many improvements?"

"No—it takes so long to look after the cattle that I can't improve much."

"Have you got a good well on the premises?"

"Yes—a clippin good one; only it leaks a little."

"Leaks! How's that?"

"Ye see we dug down forty feet, when we came to rock, but no water; then I walled it up, and we haul the water from the river, about forty barrels a day, an' fill into it."

"We don't use more'n five gallons a day; all the rest leaks out somehow. I was gwine to dig another well next year, but p'raps I can hire the water hauled on the cars cheaper'n I can build!"

For thirteen years this old planter had hauled forty barrels of water a day to empty into that rock-bottomed hole rather than dig a new well, or bring water in a pipe from a spring only a mile away.

For Girls Only.

You are to allow no personal freedom from gentlemen of your acquaintance. If a finger is put out to examine a chain on your dress, draw back and take it off for inspection if you choose. The reason of this is clearer to those who are better acquainted with the world. The reason is very clear to every one who comes to twenty-five years of age. A girl who protects herself from the freedom so much in vogue in society, increases her own value if she only a new it, with those she may have to repulse. I don't believe in prudishness or suspicion, but I do believe that men and women who are not content with the friendship that can be expressed by frank, kind eyes, and cordial, brief hand shakes and clear words one is not ashamed that the whole world should hear, should know what intoxication they are sharing. —Ex.

An old lady says that "this going off to be doctored is all well enough if folks are well to start on; but if they are sick she thinks they'd better stay at home."