The Young Widow.

She is modest, but not bashful,
Free and easy, but not bold;
Like an apple ripe and mellow,
Not to young and not to old;
Half inviting, half repulsive,
Now advancing, and now shy—
There is mischief in her dimple,
There is danger in her eye.

She has studied human nature,
She is schooled in all the arts;
She has taken her diploma
As the mistress of all hearts.
She can tell the very moment
When to sigh and when to smile;
Oh a maid is sometimes charming
But a widow—all the while.

Are you sad? How very serious
Will her handsome face become
Are you angry? She is wretched,
Lonely, friendless, fearful dumb
Are you mirthful? How her laughter,
Silver sounding, will ring out!
She can lure and catch and play you,
As the angler does the trout.

Ye old bachelors of forty,
Who have grown so bald and wise
Young Americans of twenty,
With the love-looks in your eyes;
You may practice all the lessons
Taught by Cupid since the fall;
But I know a little widow
Who could win and fool you all.

THE PRIMA DONNA.

CHAPTER I.

AN EARTHLY PARADISE.

Yes, I am totally blind. And it is no small loss to lose the blessed power of seeing that which is, or is supposed to be, in daily existence about one. If my blind eyes could see, to-night, for instance, they would rest upon something very different from that which occasionly haunts me, and I should not so often find myself in the gallery of the Past. It is not, however, without its pleasures, that gallery of memory, and it is not without very emphatic compensations.

There is there a little still-life study over which I love to linger, for it recalls the green banks of the Rhine and the little town of Boppard. There are hills, all terraced by vineyards warmed by the Southern sun, on one side, and ragged ledges, bare rocks creeping up into the sky on the other side. The rocks are garnished and crested with gray, castellated walls and battlements of an old fortess, grim and threatening; its watch towers clinging to the very edge of the cliff. A few narrow streets down below and between are full of all doubtful odors; a weather-stained tower or two, all ivy-grown and picturesque, bringing half forgotten ages into the present; a moss grown spire of solid stone work rising over an old church — half asleep; a puff of steam and a wreath of white smoke hanging just above a new railway station—wide awake. That is Boppard; silent, sombre Boppard; just a bit of centuries ago gone astray into to-day.

Haunting those old streets, once upon a time, there was a ragged little atom of humanity, more or less a nuisance to himself and to every one else, who had never known the luxury of a father or mother or even of the most distant relative, who had never possessed a farthing that he could call his own, who was innocent of the slightest knowledge of where he was born and could only guess when by making comparisons with other children who might, perhaps, be twice his own age. It was I.

All that I knew of myself, concerning my ancestory, was that Italian blood ran in my veins. This I learned from a good old soul in Boppard who took pity upon me through my boyhood, and played more or less the part of a guardian, telling me over and over again, all that she knew of my mother; that she was an Italian woman, very beautiful, but unable to speak a word of German, who came one day upon Boppard from—no one knew where, bringing with her a boy just old enough to walk beside her, clinging to her hand. The next day she went away, alone, and still no one knew where, expect so faras her body was concerned, for they had laid that in the paupers' vault, down by the slumbering church. There was no estate to settle; she had absolutely nothing in the world to leave to me except my name and only one name at that; just "Carlo." She called me Carlo when she was dying, and so the good people of Boppard called me Carlo afterward. That and the clothes I had on were absolutely all that was left to me except an insatiable desire to make pictures of whatever pleased my fancy.

How I grew, even to boyhood has been a mystery to me; yet, while growing, I managed to gather from here and there a few random suggestions in art, even in Boppard. I watched and wondered while the stupid village painter created a sign or stained a door, with raptuous envy or unintelligible vexation as the design or shading harmonized or clashed with my incoherent ideas of unrecognized art; but the sum and substance of my only real, conscious ambition lay in one supreme, omnipresent desire to please a little maid of the Fatherland, named Mina.

Poor as I was—so very much poorer than any other boy in Boppard—it was strange good fortune that, from my earliest recollection, Mina was a loyal companion, playmate and friend. She had flaxen hair and light blue eyes. She had laughing lips and a happy, generous heart. That was Mina. My Mina.

Together we played day after day upon the Rhine, in its muddy, midsummer gurgle, with many an eddy and whirl hurrying over the shallows, or its springtime freshets, as it roared and thundered between its banks, sometimes overflowing them; now a great, broad sheet of turbulent Switzerland; then a lower, deeper murmur of the Fatherland, shimmering over its shining sands. Many and many an autumn day we crossed the river, in the ungainly Rhine row-boats, to climb among the vineyards opposite, while the sun was touching the ruddy clusters with a tincture of blue, turning them purple. It was quite against all the laws of the land for us to ramble about in the vineyards when the grapes were ripening, but there never was a keeper so bold as to shake his head at Mina when she presented her little self or at me when I followed her; though I very well knew what my reception would have been if by chance I had ventured there alone or with some one else than Mina.

To the right of Boppard are the ruined walls of the old castle where day after day we rambled, playing ourselves quite out of poverty and Boppard, and into great lords and ladies, knights and sweethearts, gallantly observing all the chivalrous decorum of those stately days of yore, and living, to the minutest detail, the legendary lore so fondly fostered in song and story by the true hearts on the Rhine.

Oh, I was all for my Mina then, and my Mina was all for me. Often there were other children with us, but that did not matter; for if my Mina were Lady of the Castle I was always the Lord, and if I were champion of some mystic battlefield, coming home from a great crusade, it was always Mina who was the sweetheart waiting for me at the most. It was all real life to us—far more real than poverty and Boppard. We might have fancied that our actual existence, down in the valley, was a myth, but we never doubted the reality of those wondrous tales, or dreamed that they were but royal romances created by modern mythograthers who, in marchen magic, illuminated the feudal transports of the Rhine.

When we were tired, for the time, of pretending, I would stealthfully extract a piece of slate from the old wall and upon it draw pictures of Mina, with bits of colored crayon which we had found from time to time and which we treasured as our lives. These pictures were not alway the same. Sometimes they represented the little angel of Boppard—a nut brown maid with berry stained fingers; sometimes they were the Lady of our Dreamland Castle; but ever and always they were Mina. And Mina alone of all Boppard praised my pictures; the rest, both old and young, either laughed at them or angrily bade me spend my time less foolishly. Mina alone liked them. She would smile and say that I made her prettier than she really was but she would sit by me and help me with her sympathy and encouragement. I would often shake my head and, for an instant catching a glimpse of the great world of possibility beyond me, would say, without at all understanding what I meant, "No, no, Mina, it is really not half so beautiful as you seem to me; but there is something the matter with the crayon, it never just does what I am thinking it will do"; and Mina would laugh and praise me still.

There was not a boy in Boppard but dressed better than I, was stronger than I, and had much more to boast of than I, yet all the boys envied me the friendship of my Mina. When I wondered how it came about that the friendship was mine, I unconsciously philosophized upon it that I could draw pictures and the other boys could not, therefore it must be the pictures.

It was only a thought of innocent and ignorant youth, but it became a long, long thought, stretching far away into the future and growing with time, till it formed the one controlling idea of my life and led me at last into a most serious blunder, accounting for, but my no means excusing much in the years that followed which might better have been otherwise.

I prized the love of Mina as only a boy could who knew in his heart that but for it he would have been an utter outcast. What did the other children care for me when Mina was not there! When she was with me I was lord of the castle, lord of the vineyard, lord of everything. If she were not beside me I had to look well to my ears that I did not lose them altogether in the wholesale and indiscriminate boxings bestowed upon them by any one who chanced to be out of temper; and I cannot wonder that when the boy felt that for all this loyal protection he was really indebted to his little powers at art he became an ardent devotee at the altar of unknown æsthetics. It was either that I loved the art for Mina, or that I loved for art; which it was I am not yet postive; but I was sure that everything depended upon Mina and equally sure that Mina depended upon my pictures. To conquer in one or the other was the great, solitary hope and ambition of my boyhood, and without once pausing to determine for which or for what I was struggling, or trying in any way to understand myself, I felt the sentiment grow stronger and stronger as I grew.

When we were alone Mina would sing to me. She sang as we played in the vineyards. She sang as I made pictures for her; and I knew, even then, that her voice must be like the voices of the angels. She would sing the songs of the Rhine boatmen, unfurling the ungainly sail, making a rudder of a clumsy oar and steering the rude craft across the rushing river. She sang the sweeter melodies of the vineyards, when all the villagers climb the pyramidal hills, to gather the ripening clusters of grapes for the famous Rhine wines; or she sang the wilder songs of chivalry borrowed from Rhinish history and, laughing, she would declare that she was singing songs for me, by-and-by, when I had grown to be a man; but the dearest of all to me, the sweetest song she sang, was the tale of Lorelei. I never thought of its rude side while she was singing. I never thought of anything, in fact, but of the melody and the way Mina sang it. I would ask her to sing it again and again, for it seemed as though I could never be satisfied. I would clap my hands and tell her that she was a great opera singer and I was the audience applauding, and that I should keep up the applause until she came back to sing it once more. I loved music with true Italian instinct, and I really knew much more about the ways of opera than of art; for in one the village sign-painter had been my only and unwilling master, while in the other, even in Boppard, in midsummer, wandering minstrels would sometimes appear, in the dismal hall, in what great letters on the surrounding walls announced as "Opera." I would steal in, when I could, to listen and to see how things were done at the opera; but I knew very well that not one of those bedizened artists ever sang so sweetly as did my Mina.

Mina was very much wiser than I or she might have thought of me and of music as I thought of her and of art; so, it came to this in the end that, according to our different capacities, I loved my Mina and my Mina loved me; better and better each day as we lived it; yet neither of us knew what love was, by any name or definition; other, each for the other and both for the each and while our hearts were growing into beautiful, I alone, by a discordant misconception of it all, was marring what might have resulted in the sweetest harmony, and in those happy days was scrupulously paying the premiums upon a policy which insured long years of rank incongruities, where there seemed to lie before us only a promised land, an earthly paradise.

CHAPTER II.

A STRANGER ENTERS.

A stranger passed through Boppard, one summer day.

I had grown to be almost a man, to my own thinking—a half-sized boy of about 14—without advancing a single step beyond the first impressions and convictions of my life. Mina was 13, and she was just as much my guardian angel as ever she was. With colored crayons I was sketching a battle scene for her upon the smooth surface of the Rhine wall, overlooking the river, on the road up to the castle, and just as devotedly trying to please her as when she was but 9 and I but 10 years old.

The stranger stood for a moment at my back, looking over my shoulder. I suppose he had been visiting the castle. Strangers very often went up and down from Boppard on that road, and very often, too, paused to look over my shoulder, if I chanced to be making a picture for Mina. Sometimes they would say something complimentary, sometimes they would ask a question, sometimes they would go away in silence. For all or neither I cared nothing, for Mina was beside me and it was for her that I was working. This time, however, after the stranger had watched for a moment, in a deep and peculiar voice, speaking very slowly, he observed:

"My boy, if you will pardon what may appear to you as an intrusive suggestion from an humble pedestrian, it is his opinion that, if you should study you would do better." Then, turning, he walked quietly away toward Boppard.

A boy's heart swelled indignantly within me; a boy's pride in his only power rose in rebellion. A stranger had reproached me! Wonder of wonders, he had dared to do it right before my Mina! Why, there was not a man in Boppard bold enough to box my ears if Mina were in sight. The stranger might have done that, however, and even if Mina had not openly resented it (which was possible) it would not have hurt me very much; but he had aimed a blow directly at my citadel; he had struck at the only power that I possessed, so far as I knew, to hold to me the affection and the loyalty of my only friend. I did not dare to look into Mina's eyes, but angrily gathered up a handful of dust, from the road, and, when the stranger was too far away from me to notice it, I threw it after him with a muttered imprecation. It was not for him or his opinion that I cared, but for the danger in which he had placed me. Soon enough I saw the result of it; for, to my utter chagrin, Mina caught my uplifted hand, exclaiming, "For shame, Carlo!"

"What right had he to look at my picture?" I answered, angrily. "I was not making it for him, I was making it for for you!"

Very gently Mina replied:

"He did not mean to make you angry, he only told you just what you have so often said yourself, that you must study. Why how much better you draw now than when we were babies! and of course you will do, oh! so much better when you are a man and can study."

I stood there stunned. Did I hear that from Mina? Was is Mina who turned upon me and crushed the clay feet of my idol? Was it Mina who laughed and said I could do better?

If it takes two to make friends, as it does to make a quarrel, I am sure we were not the best of friends that night as we walked back to Boppard, and I could not by any possibility have understood it, had any one told me that Mina was never so much my friend before. I entirely forgot to be angry with the stranger, I was so much more angry with Mina. I could not speak to her. The words choked me when I tried to answer her questions; and at last she gave up talking and took refuge in that old, old philosophy—that music hath charms.

She began to sing.

Poor little Mina! She knew how I liked to hear her sing and she knew how, most of all, I liked the Lorelei. So she sang of the great rock over the river just above St. Goar; of the rapids and the shallows and the hidden ledges at the bend of the river; of the great cliff up above them and the golden-haired Lorelei seated upon it, singing her wondrous song; of the bewildered boatmen sweeping down those rapids, heedless of oar and sail, listening to the fatal melody. And all the while, as my angry heart followed the story, I thought of myself as the boatman, of my little life as the rapids, of the stranger as the hidden ledge, at the bend of the river, and of Mina and her love as the Lorelei and her song.

She sang of the shock as the boat struck the rocks and the boatmen were swept away; closing the song with a little trill, all of her own composition, which I had always applauded most merrily, regardless, both of us I fancy, of the sad refrain preceding it, for it had never seemed sad to me before—

"Und das hat mit ihrem Singen
Die Lorelei gethan."

All my life, it seemed to me, I had been listening to the love-song of Lorelei, fondly dreaming that it was to me she was singing, because she was proud of me, only to awaken to a wreck, upon the first reality that appeared; with the cruel verdict that I could do better; and, in all sincerity and earnestness I muttered savagely that last refrain, "And this is what, with her singing, my Lorelei has done."

Oh, the blindness and the folly of it! Deliberately and angrily I turned upon my little Mina, whose heart, doubtless, was sadder than mine could possible have been, but who was singing in spite of it because she was sorry for me that I was sad, and I, only intent to avenge a wrong which no one had ever done me, exclaimed:

"I am not the only dolt! If you should study music, Mina, you would sing a great deal better than you do now."

"So, indeed, I should, Carlo," Mina replied, smiling through her tears. "And that is just what I am going to do while you are studying art, you know."

This only made me so much the more angry that, without even saying good-night to Mina, I turned abruptly into a narrow alley, from which wound upward a long staircase, leading to a little attic chamber—my home.

I could pity and appreciate Mina quite enough now to make up for any lack of appreciation and pity then, if it were only then and not now, as she went slowly on her way to her mother's house, a little farther down the street, unconsciously singing still the same song of the Lorelei. I could hear every note of it.

Dear little Mina!

(To be continued)

It is reported that the Czar has ordered a postponement of the application of the anti-Semitic laws for three years, owing to the representations of financiers.

ATTENDING FUNERALS.

It is a Good and Wholesome Exercise—The Agnostic Editor.

It does a man good to attend a funeral. Solemn thoughts arouse the better natures of men. The peal of the church organ thrills the human frame and plunges its hearers into deeper thought. The presence of death unlocks the inner chamber of the heart, and the mantle of worldly charity to self is lifted. Self-inspection under a moral light follows, with a tinge of repentant feeling. Death teaches the duty of man to man and fosters soulful friendship between the living.

One night the news editor of a daily paper sat in his office telling stories with a friend. He had just finished relating a story of a young man who slept in a jewelry store in Kansas City, and awakening one night and finding a robber in the room managed to kill him with a rusty old sword. Then, placing one of the corpse's feet under each arm, he dragged his victim to the police station.

"How is it," asked the friend, "that a man could do such a thing?"

"Oh, pshaw!" said the editor, "I presume he was like me. I have no horror of death. I would experience no different feeling, if a dead man were in this room, than I do with you here. I believe that if there was but one bed at my disposal and a corpse lay on that, I should make the corpse lie over and sleep with it. When a man is dead he is *non est*. I don't believe in a hereafter, and all this fine feeling over death is but the result of thousands of years of superstition."

When the editor finished his bold assertion, not a little braggingly, he went to work again, and the old friend departed. But a few nights afterwards the latter returned to pay another visit. As he entered the door he noticed a marked change in the usual bold, careless manner of the editor. The latter rose from his chair, and pressed his friend's hand tightly, and tears almost welled from his reddened eyes.

"Why, what is the matter?" asked his friend.

"My father died last night," answered the editor. "Sit down"; and when his friend was seated he continued: "I want to take back what I said the other night about death. I witnessed the most touching scene of life last night, and it made me cry like a child. My father and mother were both past 60 years of age. For months my father had been gradually sinking, but we did not expect the end so soon. The paper had just gone to press last night when I received word to come home immediately. When I reached home the end was very near. My mother sat at the head of the bed, bending over the emaciated form of my father, with tears streaming down her dear old face. I had been there but a moment when, with the last bit of strength left, he raised his arms and his lips moved as if he would speak. Tenderly she placed her arms around him and said: 'I understand you, Ben, but I can go no farther with you. We must part now, and you must go on alone, but I'll not be long coming, and we will meet again in heaven. Good bye, Ben.'

'The old man's lips moved faintly again, and he fell back on his pillow with a happy, resigned expression on his face. I can't believe those two old people will never meet again," concluded the editor with tears in his eyes.

This was but a stronger incident of the effect of death on the living. Few men, if any, have the worldly strength to make themselves believe that death cannot arouse a religious feeling within them. The funeral impresses the greatest truth of life—that it has an end, and thought of death suggests the question, whither?

Among the prominent men who have passed to their reward during the present year may be mentioned Cardinal Newman, Cardinal Pecchi (brother of the Pope), Dr. Doellinger, Canon Liddon and Rev. Robert Laird Collier, all ecclesiastics of world-wide celebrity. Of military men Lord Napier of Magdala, and Major-Gen. Terry are perhaps the most famous who have died. Other names to be mentioned are those of August Belmont, the New York banker and politician; William III., King of Holland; the Duke of Aosta, ex-King of Spain; Adam Forepaugh, the famous showman; Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton, the African traveller and explorer; Sitting Bull, the Sioux chief, who was largely responsible for the Custer massacre; the Sultan of Zanzibar; General Salamanca, Captain-General of Cuba, and Dr. C. H. Peters, the eminent astronomer

Ladies' Footgear.

The newest embroidery for shoes is in gold thread like a spider's web, with a red and gold spider and a blue and white-headed fly.

Very fine floral embroidery is introduced on black shoes in pink and green beads.

Bands across the instep are new, and so are the suede shoes, covered with narrow stitched bands of a darker shade. Tiny buckles are principally worn, with no bows at all.—*London Letter in Chicago News.*

Frightful Scandal.

"Dreadful scandal about Dr. Puix."

"So?"

"He claims to be a bachelor, but I heard yesterday he'd buried 19 wives."

"Horrible!"

"Yes, isnt'it? Other men's wives, I mean, of course."

That's So.

Ottawa *Journal*: If Mr. Plimsoll's charges have not been substantiated with regard to inhuman treatment of cattle in the Canadian export trade, they have certainly developed a great deal of useful information regarding inhumanity to human beings.

"For Sale by Druggists."

A Berlin cable says: It is officially announced that the public sale of the Koch lymph will soon be entrusted to druggists throughout this country.

An extensive phosphate deposit is said to have been discovered in Loughboro' township.

Dr. E. M. Lott, of London, Eng., has been appointed Professor of music in Trinity University.

LAMP-POSTS OF PARIS.

They are Artistic and Kept in Perfect Order.

Paris has about 1300 miles of gas mains and pipes, and consumes in the manufacture of gas over 1,000,000 tons of coal yearly. There are over 50,000 gas lamps, consuming different quantities of gas, according to the importance of the locality. With a population of about 2,225,000, the city consumed in 1889 312,258,070 cubic metres of gas. The lanterns are mostly circular, that form being preferred as casting the least shadow, and of glass beautifully white and clear. Reflectors are commonly used, as it is estimated that they increase the light 30 per cent. The lamp-posts are of bronzed iron, and great attention is paid to artistic form and solidity of pose. They taper gracefully upward from a conical base to the lantern, which is itself handsomely ornamented and surmounted usually by a castellated design. They are from eight to about ten feet in height, and the gas company is required to keep them, as well as the lanterns, in perfect order.—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

Grace Before Meat.

BY WILLIAM MURRAY, HAMILTON.

Thanks, O God! to Thee for these
Tokens of Thy love,
And for what our souls can seize
Of the joys above.

Bless these earthly mercies, Lord,
For our health and strength,
And to us and ours accord
Heaven itself at length.

Our unholy spirits cleanse
In Thy living lake,
And forgive us all our sins
For our Saviour's sake. Amen.

New Year's Greeting.

Here is a very good one. It went through the mail to-day, printed on a tag, attached to which was the cork of a champagne bottle:

May merry yule,
Of bumper joys be full.

I'd like to crack a bottle, friend,
With thee, for Auld Lang Syne,
And as I wet my throttle, friend,
Drink joy to thee and thine.

Tho' cash I can't out-fork, my friend,
Kind hearts are more than wealth;
So let us smell the cork, my friend,
And sniff each others health;

Wishing you a very happy new year.

Dr. Dodd's Death.

New York *Times*: When the Rev. Dr. Stephen Dodd died, an East Haven poet took upon himself the duty of writing a suitable epitaph, and here is what he presented, with due respect, to the widow:

"Here lies the body of Dr. Dodd,
Have mercy on his soul, O God;
Almighty God, do unto Dodd
As Dodd would do if he were God."

Boston, Brooklyn, Buffalo.

Here are some interesting statistics of three cities which spell their names with a big B: Boston contains $822,026,100 of taxable property and $26,592,400 of property exempt from taxation The rate per $1,000 is $13.20. Brooklyn's assessed valuation is $452,758,601, an increase over 1890 of $24,274,920. Its net debt is $38,131,565, an increase of $3,492,023. In other words its net debt is $1 for every $12.37 of valuation. The net debt of Buffalo is $9,986,736, an increase of $245,670 over 1890.

Rather Realistic.

Exchange: The gamins of the city are crazy over the Eyraud trial, and crowds are gathering about the Palais de Justice and every convenient corner singing the now popular refrain:

She lured the man into her lair, tra-la,
And her lover he strangled him there, tra-la;
With a kiss and a hug
And a rope and a tug
They did the job neatly and well;
Oh! La Belle Gabrielle!
They knew tha' he carried a cheque, tra-la,
And to grab it they twisted his neck, tra-la;
For poor old Gouffe there was "old Nick" to play
For I fear the old man went to h—ll
Through La Belle Gabrielle.

Few and Far Between.

Chicago *Inter Ocean:* Now and then you come across men and women who remark, "I hate children." It is always safe to run a black line through the centre of their names and in every relation in life give them a "wide berth." A man or woman who "hates" innocent childhood treads the riskiest path of any man or woman in all this universe.

He Was Sceptical.

New York *Sun*: Old Robinson (reading)—The average weight of the Wellesley College girl is 119½ pounds.

Young Robinson—H'm! I'd like to go up to Wellesley and test that statement.

He'd Never Get It.

Life "Drop me a line," yelled the drowning man. "What's the use?" said the humorist on the dock. "There's no post office where you are going."

As an example how the heritage of the people was bestowed upon favorites in ye olden time, we publish a clipping from the Dundee *People's Journal* which has been sent us:

"I, Malcolm Kanmore, King, the first of my reign, gives to thee, Barron Hunter, uper and nether Powmade, with all the lands within the flood, with the Hack and the Hacktoun, and all the bounds up and down, above the earth to Heaven, and all below the earth to hell, as free to thee and thine as ever God gave to me and mine, and that for a bow and a brod arrow when I come to shuit upon Yarrow, and for the mair suith I bite the white wax with my teeth before Margrat my wife, and Moll my nurse.

"Sic subscribtur,
"1057, MALCOLM KANMORE, King.
"MARGARET, Witness.
"MOLL, Witness."

Miss Hulda Friedericks, who expects to come across the water soon to write up the Irish question in America for a London newspaper, is well known as a writer for British journals. She is a German girl, still under 30, and is master of several languages.

In a joint caucus of the Republicans of the Oregon House and Senate John H. Mitchell was nominated by acclamation United States Senator to succeed himself

Chancellor Von Caprivi states that proposals for the abolition of corn dues mad in the Reichstag will probably be shelved by being referred to the Budget Committee.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has 27,715 members at present, an increase of 2,312 in 1890.