

## A SYMPHONY IN YELLOW AND RED.

WE owe a great debt to Mr. Whistler for having reclaimed the good word "symphony" from the arbitrary monopoly of music writers. At first we wondered at the daring reprisal; but presently the right of it became so plain that we only wondered no man had done it before.

Henceforth they who make harmonies for the eye will hold the word fraternally in common with those who make harmonies for the ear, and no just person can call it an affectation. And he also who seeks to render in words, as others in music or color, some one of nature's gracious harmonies which has greatly delighted him, will do it all the better by the help of this good word in the beginning. Except for it, I think I should have never believed it possible to tell what I am going to try to tell now. One day an artist in Colorado spoke to me of Mr. Whistler's *Symphony in White*.

"Ah," said I, "Colorado is a symphony in yellow and red." And as soon as I had said the words, the colors and the shapes in which I knew them seemed instantly to be arranged in my thought: places miles apart began to knit themselves together into a concerted and related succession; spots and tints I had only vaguely recognized became distinct and significant, each in its order and force; and more and more as I looked from the plains to the mountains and from the mountains to the plains, and stood in the great spaces crowded with gay and fantastic rocks, all the time bearing in mind this phrase, it grew to seem true and complete and inevitable.

I ought to say at the outset that in speaking of the coloring of Colorado, I speak only of the part of Colorado which I know thoroughly, the vicinity of the town of Colorado Springs, which lies seventy miles south of Denver, at the foot of Pike's Peak. There is a similar brilliance and variety of coloring in other

parts of the Territory, but I know them less.

"The eye paints best in the presence, the heart in the absence, of the loved object," said Bettina. To-day, as I sit on a New England hill-side and look westward, the pale blue bar of the horizon line seems a vista, rather than a barrier, and I see the Colorado plains lying beyond; see them as distinctly as if I were standing on their very edge, and counting the belts and bands of color which I know the fiery Colorado sun is at this very moment printing on their surface.

When I first saw them they were gray; blank, bald, pitiless gray, under a gray November sky. "A sea of gray ice!" I said to myself. "It is terrible." To the east and the south and the north they stretched, apparently endless; broken only by a few buttes rising as gray icebergs might, frozen fast in the gray sea. To the west, a mountain wall; mountains which looked like black adamant crystallized into immovable and giant shapes. Had I passed by then, and never seen those plains and mountains again, the picture would have lived in my memory always as the picture of a place fit for the old Scandinavian hell. I recall the scene now, as one recalls a vision from a nightmare dream. No darkest day ever produced it again. After I had once seen the plains aglow, nothing could make them anything but beautiful. We know no face till it smiles. If the smile is a true smile, the face is transfigured to us forever.

These plains are thick-covered with grasses: the buffalo grass, which grows in low tufts or mats, with a single tiny, dark, spear-shaft head on each stalk; and two or three other sorts which have fine feathery blossoms. These dry in wonderful colors, yellows and reds; the yellows shade up to scarlets, and the reds down to the darkest claret. There are also numerous weeds, whose tiny flowers dry on their stalks in the marvelous pre-

servicing air of the plains. These too dry into yellow and berry-red. I especially remember one of these which eluded me for a long time. I had noticed, in my drives, spots of vivid red here and there on the ground at short distances from the road, but saw nothing to explain them. When I walked over the same ground I found only the usual grasses and indifferent-colored weeds. At last, one day, I saw a big patch of this color, half a rod long; when I reached the spot, I found myself walking over myriads of infinitesimal stems, not more than an inch or two from the ground, each holding at top a tiny dried calyx, bright red, the size of a pin's head. Singly or in small bunches they would hardly be seen, and yet I afterwards recognized that they made superb masses of color in many places. I carried a bunch of them home, but their color had gone out. In vain I set them in strong light on a window-sill; they would not be bright red any longer. They needed the free air of the plains, and the sun striking through.

There are no trees or bushes on these plains, except along the small and infrequent creek courses. Looking down from heights you trace the creeks from horizon to horizon, not by glistening lines of water, but merely by zigzag lines of deeper color; in the summer by lines of vivid green, in the winter by lines of dark red, pale yellow, and gray. The bare cotton-wood trees are gray; the willows, of which there are several varieties growing luxuriantly, are yellow and red: yellow as gold, and with the sheen of satin on their stems; red as wine, and taking the sun as flashingly. A little marsh filled with them, and lying in a hollow of the plain, makes, on a bright day, such a blaze of shaded and graduated color as I do not know elsewhere. When above these claret and yellow willow stems rises a copse of leafless cotton-woods, of soft, filmy gray, the whitest gray ever seen, the combination of color is at once so dainty and so vivid that one is amazed that so subtle an effect can last day after day. Yet there they stand, all through January, all through February, all through March, and through April,

well into May, a perpetual delight. These are the months in which the coloring of the plains is at its best. When spring fades the willows, covers the cotton-woods with light green leaves, and turns the plains to a pale olive-green, the landscape becomes tame in comparison with its winter hue. I have spent winter afternoons on the bluffs to the east of the town, looking down on the plains when they were yellow as wheat fields in August, of as even surface as a close shorn lawn, and with great belts and irregular spaces of paler or deeper yellow, berry-red, claret, and dark brown. Looking at these miles of shaded and blended colors one finds the worn-out simile of a carpet almost fresh in one's thought, because so inevitable. Then, when swiftly moving clouds make a play of shadows upon the carpet, it looks more like a sea. There is a peculiar tint of blue in all shadows in Colorado. When they are cast upon snow the effect is indescribably beautiful. A fantastic chariot in mazarine blue glides noiselessly by your side as you drive; a double in ghostly clothes of blue steel slips on ahead of you as you walk. These shifting blue shadows on the yellow plains give them a wonderful semblance to the sea under alternating sunlight and shade.

The northern horizon of this shining carpet, this sunlit sea, is a deep blue wall. This is the Divide, the tableland separating the Denver plains from ours. It is eight thousand feet high at its highest, and thickly grown with pines; but it looks simply like a solid bar of blue.

The western horizon is a mountain range, Pike's Peak, nearly fifteen thousand feet high, its central and culminating point, whose tints shall be fiery red, golden yellow, or deep purple blue, according as you see them: fiery red at dawn, yellow in the first flood of sunrise, and purple just after the sun has set. The southern and eastern horizons are sky or plain, you know not which. Whether the sky bends and droops, or the plain hollows and curves up to the tender, vanishing line in which both cease to be, you never know; and

your not knowing is the charm, the spell, under which you gaze and gaze into the immeasurable distance, until myriads of worlds seem to be coming and going just along the outer edge of this one. On a very clear day, two blue pyramids rise in the south, and a long, low, undulating line like blue mist is seen at their right. These are the Spanish Peaks, a hundred miles away, and the range is the Sangre di Cristo. What a strange audacity of reverence there seems in the way the Spaniard has set the name of his Christ everywhere! In the east, there are a few near buttes or bluffs. They also are yellow, darkened by low growths of pines and firs. They rise up like fortresses. Among them lie and wind labyrinthine valleys, — sheltered spots in which sheep-raisers find warm nooks for themselves and for their sheep at night. These buttes or bluffs are mainly of yellow sandstone; the growth of firs and low oaks is so thin that it does not hide the yellow tint, only makes a dark fretwork over it. Coming closer to them, you see that their sides are strangely rounded, and, as it were, hewn into projections like towers, bastions, parapets, arches, — ledges and chasms and toppled bowlders everywhere. No wonder the yellow plain looks like a sunlit sea, for not so very long ago, as the earth reckons her ages, it was a great lake, and these were the cliffs on its shores. Climbing up these bluffs, and wandering in their shady recesses, one thinks of EDOM and Petraea. Strange shapes of yellow sandstone are standing or lying about in a confusion which is at once suggestive and bewildering. They are mostly rounded and grooved columns, of tapering and irregular forms, sometimes broken short off, but more often widening at the top into a broad cap, like an anvil. Many of them are of such grotesque shapes that at every turn they take new and fantastic semblances, seem to have leering or malicious faces, sometimes almost to be peering out and disappearing mockingly behind the trees. Their color is not a uniform yellow, but is of a variety of shades and tones, often deepening into orange or scarlet, often

shading up to nearly white at top, and then finished off with the anvil-like cap of dark brown, green, or red. The ground is strewn with odd, round pebbles, large and small, of the same friable yellow stone. Many of them are broken open into equal halves, a round hollow in the centre of each, as if they were petrified husks of nuts. Many of them bear fantastic resemblances to birds or beasts. There was one well known for months to all frequenters of the bluffs; it was as comical a rooster as could have been molded out of clay. The gardener had put it on the top of a pile of stones, where two roads crossed, and it was a familiar landmark. At last, one day, a traveler carried it to the Colorado Springs Hotel, and showed it in triumph as a rare trophy. It was recognized at once.

“Why, that is the rooster from Austin’s Bluffs.”

“You cannot have that. It is private property. Mr. Austin’s gardener put it on that pile of stones. You must carry it back.”

Public opinion was too strong for the traveler to resist. The rooster was carried back and remounted on his pedestal; only, alas, to disappear again, in the grasp of some less honest visitor, who, I hope, may read this paragraph and blush to recollect how he “robbed” that “roost.”

Twelve miles northward of Colorado Springs is a group of beautiful small valleys known as Monument Park, from the great number of these strange sandstone rocks. It is the liveliest of all lonely places. You drive over a grassy road in the middle of a narrow green meadow, the sides of which slope up like the sides of a trough, the narrow strip of meadow ending abruptly at the base of high yellow sandstone cliffs, covered with pines, firs, and low oak shrubs. There are frequent breaks in these cliffs, and passes through them; and so crowded are these passes and cliff-sides with the yellow stone columns, that it is not at all hard to fancy that these are figures winding in and out in a procession, mounting guard, lying down, sun-

ning themselves, leading or embracing each other. Perverse people with fancies of a realistic order have given names to many of these figures and groups: The Anvil, The Quaker Wedding, The Priest and Nun, The Pincushion, and so forth. Photographers, still more perverse, have persisted in photographing single rocks, or isolated groups, with neither background nor foreground. These are to be seen everywhere, labeled "Rocks in Monument Park," and are admirably calculated to repel people from going to what would appear to be some bare, outlying pinnacle of the universe, on which imps had played at making clay figures, with high stakes for the ugliest. A true picture of Monument Park would give a background of soft yellow and white sandstone cliffs, rounded, fluted, and grooved, with waving pines thick on the top and scattering down the sides, and the statue-like rocks half in and half out among the trees; and to make the picture perfect, it should be taken looking west, so that the green valley with its fantastic yellow side walls and statues should be shut across at the farther end by a high mountain range, dark blue against a shining sky. Then, one seeing the picture could get some faint notion of what these valleys in Monument Park are like.

The famous Garden of the Gods, for which everybody asks as soon as he enters Colorado, and which nine out of ten people see for the first time with a ludicrous sense of disappointment, is another of these strange, rock-crowded parks. Who is responsible for the inappropriate name Garden of the Gods, I do not know: one more signally unfitting could hardly have been chosen. Fortress of the Gods, or Tombs of the Giants, would be better.

This park lies only three miles from Colorado Springs, and its grand gateway is in full sight from every part of the town. Fancy two red sandstone rocks three hundred feet high, of irregular outline and surface, rising abruptly and perpendicularly like a wall, with a narrow passage-way between them. The rock on your right, as you enter from

the east, is of the deepest brick-red; the one on the left is paler, more of a flesh-color. At their base is a thick growth of low oak bushes, vivid light green in summer, in winter a scarcely less vivid brown, for every leaf hangs on until April. These rocks are literally fretted full of holes and rifts: tiny round holes as smooth as if an auger had bored them; ghastly crevices and chasms smoothed and hollowed like sockets in gigantic skeletons. Thousands of swallows have nests in these, and at sunset it is a beautiful sight to see them circling high in the air, perching for a moment on the glittering red spires and pinnacles at top of the wall, and then swooping downward and disappearing suddenly where no aperture is to be seen, as if with their little bills they had cloven way for themselves into the solid rock. Within a few feet of the top of the highest spire on the right-hand rock is a small, diamond-shaped opening, a mullioned window, through which is always to be seen the same diamond-shaped bit of sky, bright blue or soft gray, or shadowy white if a cloud happens to pause so as to fill the space.

I once had the good fortune to see a white-breasted sparrow sit motionless for some minutes on a point of rock just above this window, when the sky was clear blue, and the rock vivid red in a blazing sunlight. Such a picture as that was, three hundred feet up in the air, one does not see more than once in a life-time. The sparrow's white breast looked like a tiny fleece of white cloud caught on the rock. Not till two dark wings suddenly opened out and bore the white fleece upward, did I know that it was a bird.

Passing through this majestic gateway you find yourself in the weirdest of places; your red road winds along over red ground thinly grass-grown, among low cedars, pines, and firs, and through a wild confusion of red rocks: rocks of every conceivable and inconceivable shape and size, from pebbles up to gigantic boulders, from queer, grotesque little monstrosities, looking like seals, fishes, cats, or masks, up to colossal

monstrosities looking like elephants, like huge gargoyles, like giants, like sphinxes eighty feet high, all bright red, all motionless and silent, with a strange look of having been just stopped and held back in the very climax of some supernatural catastrophe. The stillness, the absence of living things, the preponderance of grotesque shapes, the expression of arrested action, give to the whole place, in spite of its glory of coloring, spite of the grandeur of its vistas ending in snow-covered peaks only six miles away, spite of its friendly and familiar cedars and pines, spite of an occasional fragrance of clematis or smile of a daisy or twitter of a sparrow, spite of all these, a certain uncanniness of atmosphere which is at first oppressive. I doubt if one ever loved the Garden of the Gods at first sight. One must feel his way to its beauty and rareness, must learn it like a new language; even if one has known nature's tongues well, he will be a helpless foreigner here. I have fancied that its speech was to the speech of ordinary nature what the Romany is among the dialects of the civilized, — fierce, wild, free, defiantly tender; and I believe no son of the Romany folk has ever lived long among the world's people without drooping and pining.

A mile to the north of the Garden of the Gods is a very beautiful little park, walled in by high hills and sandstone rocks of many colors, red, pink, yellow, and pale gray, stained dark green and brown and red in markings so fantastic and capricious, it seems impossible that they are not painted. The outlet from this little nook to the north is a narrow canyon, little more than a cleft in the rocks. A snow-fed brook runs down through this canyon and zigzags through the little park, making it a luxuriant garden of cotton-wood trees, shrubs, and vines, and all manner of flowers. The rocks here are so towering and grand that except for the relief of their brilliant hues, and the tender leafing and flowering things around them, they would be overawing. There are single shafts like obelisks or minarets, slender, pointed, one or two hundred feet high; huge

slabs laid tier upon tier like giant sarcophagi; fretted and turreted masses like abbeys fallen into ruin: and all these are red or pink or painted in mosaic tints of green and brown and black and yellow. This nook is called Glen Eyrie; in it there is a beautiful home, and the voices of little children are often heard high up on the rock walls, where they seem as contented and as safe as the goats which are their comrades.<sup>1</sup>

I will describe but one more of these parks; I am told that there are scores of them all along the range of foot-hills running northward from Colorado Springs. I do not believe that among the scores is one to be found so beautiful as Blair Athol. I do not believe that in all the earth is a spot to be found more beautiful than Blair Athol, unless possibly it may be some of the wild flower-gardens nestled at the base of the dolomites in the Tyrol. Will there ever arise in Colorado a master to paint her rocks and mountains in the backgrounds of immortal pictures, as Titian painted the dolomites?

Blair Athol lies six miles to the northwest of Colorado Springs. Its name has a charm of sound which is not lessened when you know that the Scotchman who owns and named it added to his own name, Blair, the name of Athol, by reason of his love for house and lands of that name in Scotland. It is a spot fit for a clan and a chieftain. It lies lonely and still, biding its time. The road which leads into it is so grass-grown that it is hard to find. The spot where it turns off from the main highway is sure to be overlooked unless one keeps a close watch. It seems not to promise much, this rough, grass-grown track. It points toward foot-hills which are low and close-set, and more than usually bare. But in Colorado roads any minute's bend to right or left may give you a delicious surprise, a new peak, a far vista, a changed world. The Blair Athol road, taking a sudden curve to the left, shows you such a vista: a foreground of low oaks and pines, the hills

<sup>1</sup> This is the home of General William Palmer, President of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.

falling away to right and left and revealing the mouth of a glen walled thickly across by high pines; through this solid wall of green, fantastic gleams of deep red and rose pink; rising above it, a spire or two of bright yellow; on the left hand, sharp ridges of dark, iron-stained sandstone, green, gray, yellow, black; on the right hand, low, mound-shaped hills densely grown with pines and firs, the soil shining red below them.

As the road winds in, the rocks seem almost to wheel and separate, so many new vistas open between the pines, so many new rocks come in sight. A few steps farther, and the way seems suddenly barred by a huge mass of yellow rock; a broad light streams in from the left, the south; there lies open country. Close to the base of this yellow rock wall the road clings, still in shade of the pines, and turns an abrupt corner to the left. You are in the park. The yellow rock round which you have turned is its east wall; to the west it is walled with rocks, rose-color and white; to the north with high, conical, pine-grown hills; to the south with sharp, almost pyramidal hills and masses of detached and piled rocks, dark red and rose color. It is smooth as a meadow; its curves rise to the bases of the rocks gently and lingeringly. Groups of pines make wide fringed, circles of shade here and there; blue anemones, if it is a June day, dot the ground. A few rods farther there is a break in the eastern wall, and framed in this frame of yellow rock is a broad picture of the distant plains in bars of sunlight and shadow, gold and purple. This is the view on which must look the eastern and southern piazzas of the house when it is built, and to that end nature has left clear the slight eminence a little to the north of the centre of the park. No man building here could think of building elsewhere than on this rise, and it is surely an odd thing that not a pine has set foot in it; that they have grouped themselves all about it, with as exquisite a consideration as the king's head gardener could have shown.

Presently the road stops short on the brink of a ravine, in which once there

must have been water, for it is full of vines and shrubs, a tangle of green. Because the ravine is not bridged, we turn to the right; there is just room to creep round the base of the west wall of red rock. Turning this, lo, we are in another little park, wilder and more beautiful than the first. The ground is more broken, and there are thick copses of low oaks and pines. The red wall on this side is even stranger and more fantastic than on the other. It leans and topples, keeping all the while a general slant, northwest and southeast, which is, no doubt, to the geologist an important feature in its record. At its base, huge dark red and pale rose-colored bowlders are piled in confusion; its top is jagged; isolated peaks and projections on its sides seem to have been wrought and carved; one into a great stone chair, one into a canopied sounding-board. The stone is worn out in hollows and crevices into which you can thrust your arm up to the elbow. In these, generations of conies and squirrels have kept their "feast of the acorn," and left the shells behind. This wall is on your right; on the left, low mounds and hills, with groves of pines in front, pines so thick that you get only glimpses through them of the hills behind. Soon the road ceases, dies away as if the last traveler had been caught up, at this point, into the air. A delicious sense of being in the wilderness steals over you. Climbing up on one of the ridges of the right-hand wall, you look down into the first park, and out across it to the plains. Seen from this height, the grouping of the pines seems even more marvelous than before. It is impossible to leave off wondering what law determined it, if a landscape instinct and a prophetic sense of unbuilt homes be in the very veins of Colorado pines. The outlook eastward from this ridge is grand. It is the one which the upper windows of the house will command: in the foreground the huge yellow rock, three hundred feet long, and from one to two hundred feet high; beyond this a line of bluffs, then an interval of undulating plains, then another line of bluffs, and then the true

plains, far, soft, and blue, as if they were an outlying ocean in which the world was afloat.

Immediately below this ridge lies the exquisite little cup-like park, with its groups of pines. The rocks of its western wall, seen from this point, are not only dark red and pale rose: they show intricate markings of white and gray and yellow; the tints are as varied and beautifully combined as you would see in a bed of September asters. Underneath your feet the hollows of the rock are filled in and matted with dry pine needles; here and there, in a crevice, grows a tiny baby pine, and now and then gleams out a smooth white pebble cast up by some ancient wave, and wedged tight in the red sandstone.

As you climb higher and higher to the north, there are more rocks, more vistas, more pines and low oaks, a wilder and wilder confusion of boulders. When you reach the summit, the whole northern horizon swings slowly into view, and completes the semicircle of plains by the dark blue belt of the Divide. At the very top of this pinnacle is an old pine-tree, whose gnarled roots hold the great

boulders in their clutch, as eagles hold prey. If the tree were to blow off, some one of the days when the wind blows ninety miles an hour in Colorado, it looks as if it must go whirling through the air with the rocks still tight in its talons. There seems no soil here, yet the kin-nickinnick vines have spread shining mats of thick green all around the base of the tree. The green of these and the pine, the bright brown of the fallen cones, the shading and multiplying reds of the gigantic rocks, the yellow and blue of the far-off plains, the white and blue of the far-off sky, — all these crowd on the sight, as you sit on this crowning pinnacle of Blair Athol. The silence is absolute; but the color is so intense, so full of swift motion, change, and surprise, that it seems to be rhythmic like sound, and to fill the air fuller. It is the final chord of the symphony in yellow and red, and as, in the slow-falling twilight, it grows fainter and fainter, one recalls some of the vivid lines of America's one lyric poetess: —

“ I see the chasm yawning dread ;  
I see the flaming arch o'erhead ;  
I stake my life upon the red ! ”

H. H.

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### MACARIUS THE MONK.

In the old days, while yet the church was young,  
And men believed that praise of God was sung  
In curbing self as well as singing psalms,  
There lived a monk, Macarius by name,  
A holy man, to whom the faithful came  
With hungry hearts to hear the wondrous Word.  
In sight of gushing springs and sheltering palms,  
He lived upon the desert: from the marsh  
He drank the brackish water, and his food  
Was dates and roots, — and all his rule was harsh,  
For pampered flesh in those days warred with good.

From those who came in scores a few there were  
Who feared the devil more than fast and prayer,  
And these remained and took the hermit's vow.  
A dozen saints there grew to be; and now