

PROVENÇAL BULL-FIGHTS.



A TRY FOR THE COCARDE.

"POOH!" said the publisher, who had seen it, "it's nothing at all. They just turn the bull loose in the arena. Then they turn the populace loose. First the bull chases the populace, then the populace chases the bull. It's nothing much. Nobody gets hurt."

"Oh, eet will be no grand t'ings; ze common people, ze paysuns, le — le — le — ze — ze — ze — ze people run after ze bull," said the landlady's daughter in the English as she spoke it.

Now when I hear that anything belongs only to the people, I know that it is always worth looking up and nearly always worth seeing. The walls of Arles were placarded with great red posters proclaiming that never, never before had the historic walls of the arena seen such beautiful bulls; never, never had the fair Arlésiennes and the brave Arlésiens heard such horrid bellowings, grasped the unequal *cocarde*, or red rosette, struggled with the fierce beasts, and won the magnificent prize and the applause of the people.

Regard, noble Arlésiens! The five pure-blooded Spanish bulls and one cow! 500 francs of prizes of cocardes await you, and of the utmost honesty of the administration does not all the world know the renown? Descend then into the glorious arena stained with the blood of Christian martyrs, renowned through all the ages, and today the home of the *courses* of your beautiful Provence! Struggle with the fierce bull of Spain! Win the prize of 500 francs, the approbation of your fellow-citizens, and the smile of fair ladies!

(Signed) THE DIRECTION.

Wait for the small bills!

I could scarcely wait. I consulted Daudet, Miss Preston, "Les Courses aux Taureaux," Mistral, the daily papers, and at last I found a book, "Une Course," devoted to the subject.

What did they say?

Daudet? Nothing, except that "every year we have the *ferrade*." Miss Preston? "There was a giddy little sham bull-fight going on in

the *place*, but we did not stay to see it." "Les Courses aux Taureaux"? It was a bald description of a bull-fight, transported to Paris and held in the Hippodrome, eminently proper and therefore characterless. Mistral? Because these things are the common things of his country he gives no description of them. All facts are unreliable when you want information. "Une Course," of which I believe I was the first person to buy a copy, and I hope I may be the last, was an account of a Spanish bull-fight and the three years it took a certain individual to see it, and all told in the most stupid manner.

But now came the small bills.

Descend, descend, brave Arlésiens! But parents must guard their infants; on no account must the little ones strive against the pure bloods of Spain. Nevertheless, the direction does not hold itself accountable for the accidents. And it is most expressively forbidden to insult the bulls, or to throw small sticks and stones at them. *Especially important*: it is absolutely forbidden to attack the bulls with the big pins. But, gentlemen, all this is free — a free fight in effect. But all the same, while remembering the terrible horns, think of the value of the prize, unheard of until to-day, bestowed by a generous direction to excite your zeal and audacity. Come then, ladies and gentlemen, after you have witnessed the grand procession through the streets of your beautiful city, remembering 500 francs in prizes.

Gentlemen, one franc; ladies, 50 centimes; soldiers and children, 30 centimes.

This was Friday night. Saturday noon, in the middle of this beautiful placard, appeared a small, white, and therefore official, bill.

Arrested. Owing to the fact that the direction is determined, contrary to the desires of the mayor, to introduce, for the benefit of the city, the pure bloods of Spain into Arles, therefore Mr. Jack — in — Office, the mayor, prohibits, and the fight is interdicted.

"Aha! they make the war among themselves," said the people.

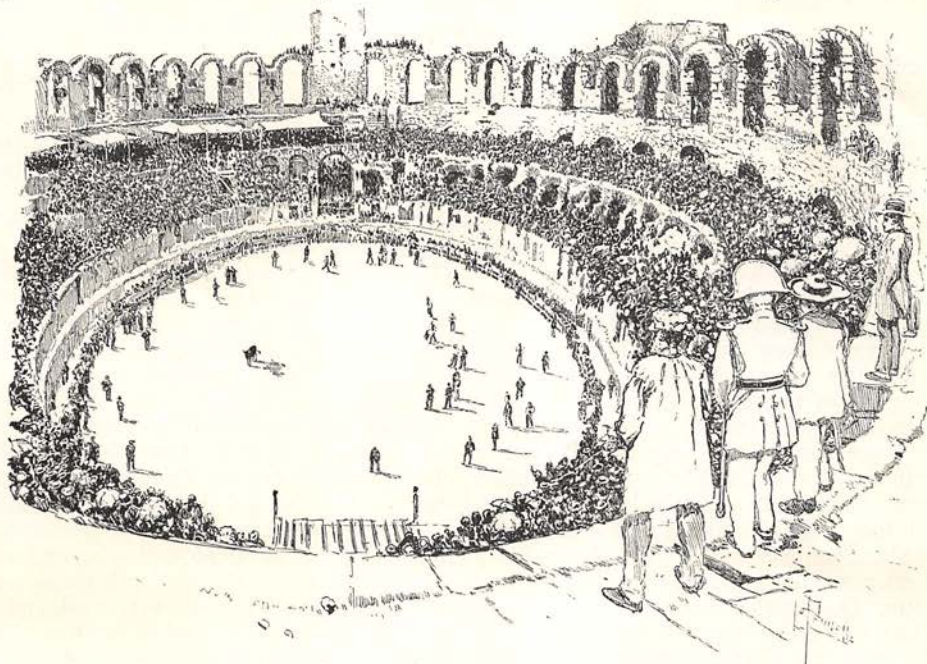
"Zey have me vell told zey refuse, I t'ink, to gif of ze place free to ze mayor, and he vill have to stop eet," said the landlady's daughter. "No, I do not t'ink eet vill go on."

This was serious. To be in Provence and not to see a bull-fight! But the walls were still placarded with notices that in another week there would be one at Nîmes. At Arles it did not come off, but the people were indifferent. They really did seem to think it no great thing.

The following Sunday I went over to Nîmes. Although it had been clear for over a month, when I started it was dark and threatening. Passing through Tarascon, I had a glimpse of a fight in progress, and I might have stopped and assisted in the town of Tartarin; but I wanted to see one in a real Roman amphitheater. By the time the train drew up at Nîmes it was pouring, and I went very sadly to the arena, only to find a notice that the fight had been

past two, — the fight had been announced for three, — one gate opened, a small boy and I rushed to secure tickets, and we entered over the stones worn into grooves by Roman senators, American tourists, and Provençal lovers of bull-fights. When we emerged where Cæsar may have stood, and the arena yawned vacant before us, there was a momentary gleam of sunlight between two huge rain-clouds.

But the arena was not long vacant. An Eng-



THE ARENA AT ARLES.

postponed. Two Sundays gone, and the summer going!

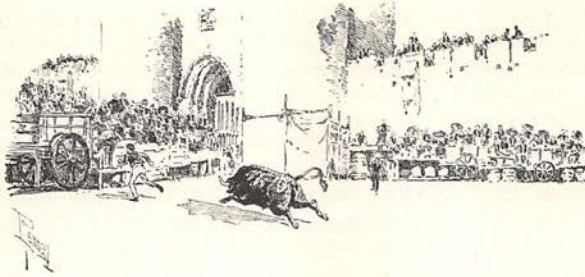
Clear all the week, the vintage in full swing, scenes like pictures all over the country, fights announced for Saint-Remy, Aigues-Mortes, Tarascon, but nothing in the arena; Sunday, however, pouring rain, and useless to think of going anywhere.

On Monday fights were announced for the following Sunday in Arles and Nîmes and in all the country round; Sunday morning it was raining in torrents; Sunday noon, drizzling; Sunday afternoon there were gleams of sunshine, interspersed with showers. But four weeks without a bull-fight — that was too much for both the people and the direction, and there was no sign of postponement. I went to a café opposite the arena at twelve. The gates were to open at one. At one it was still drizzling. At half-past it had stopped, and the direction looked out of its box-office. At a quarter of two it despatched a very brazen band in a covered wagon to parade the town. When, at half-

lishman and his wife whom I had seen at the hotel entered, and, looking down at a stage where a *café chantant* is given on the Sunday nights when there are no bull-fights, they asked me what was going on. "A bull-fight! Ah! let's go away before the horrid thing commences. Do you know when it begins? Ah! ten minutes; we have ample time to see the arena. Come, George." And they slipped rapidly round the huge circle, clambering over the broken seats, and when the band entered they disappeared. It is like this that the average tourist sees the character of a country. And they were the only foreigners, save the publisher, in Arles.

Though the sun did not come out, the rain held off, and the people, following the band, really began to crowd in. In ten or fifteen minutes the place was fairly filled. This arena was built to hold 26,000 people, so of course I do not mean that it was full. But two or three thousand are a big crowd to-day for a little town like Arles. The arena was gay with

PROVENÇAL BULL-FIGHTS.



A RUN FOR SHELTER.

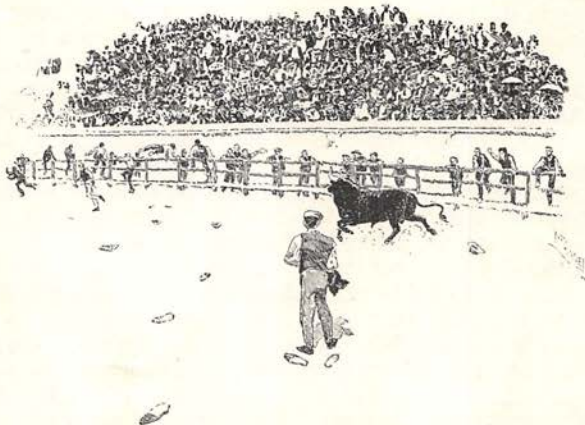
the uniforms of soldiers and the costumes of the Arlésiennes, about which one never hears, but which are really very effective, with the little lace handkerchief round the neck, the bright-colored shawl falling low on the shoulders, the low-combed hair, and the long, streaming ribbons. The women's faces are charming.

While the band has been playing, the arena has been filling with the brave amateurs. I am afraid, had Constantine been able to come down from his palace in a back alley, that he would have called the amateurs, who were now taking off their shoes and putting on slippers, coming out of their blouses and giving their hats to friends, the *ignobile vulgus*. Although there were one or two very superior young men in *torador* hats, bright red jackets, white trousers, and gorgeous Spanish leather slippers, which they were kicking off all the time, running about in their stocking-feet, the majority had no particular costume except that of the country. Despite the direction, one small boy did leap into the arena. He was pursued by the police force of Arles, caught in the center, and well spanked, amidst the applause of the audience.

The band stopped playing. A trumpeter advanced and blew a blast, and a mighty yell rose from the people. Instead of the shout in honor of heroic action which might have

been expected, there came the howl: "Ye amateurs! Aha! Maria et Pierre la bas! Turn in the bull; go it, Arlésiens! Hé! hé! for the man in the white trousers! Look at gendarmes! Zou! it's only a lamb! Hé! taureau! Allons, amateurs!" A gate opened, and into the middle of the arena there almost flew a huge, black bull. "My God! isn't he ugly! Does n't he look peart!" the audience shouted.

He saw the amateurs; they saw him; they really flew. If you want to see one hundred men vault a six-foot fence at the same moment, go to Arles. Full tilt he circled round the whole arena, the brave amateurs tumbling back away from him as he passed, waving handkerchiefs at him; some, braver, sitting atop of the six-foot wooden fence which runs just outside the old Roman stone barrier, leaving a passage between. The bull stopped in the center of the arena, bellowing and snorting, kicking the sand about with his feet, and tossing his head. He was very mad, and apparently did not know what he was about. But he is now getting his head again. The bravest amateurs cautiously crawl over the fence as far as possible from him, and as directly at his back as they can; but he keeps wheeling round and round. One gentleman with an umbrella comes in, but at a glance from the bull he drops his umbrella and falls

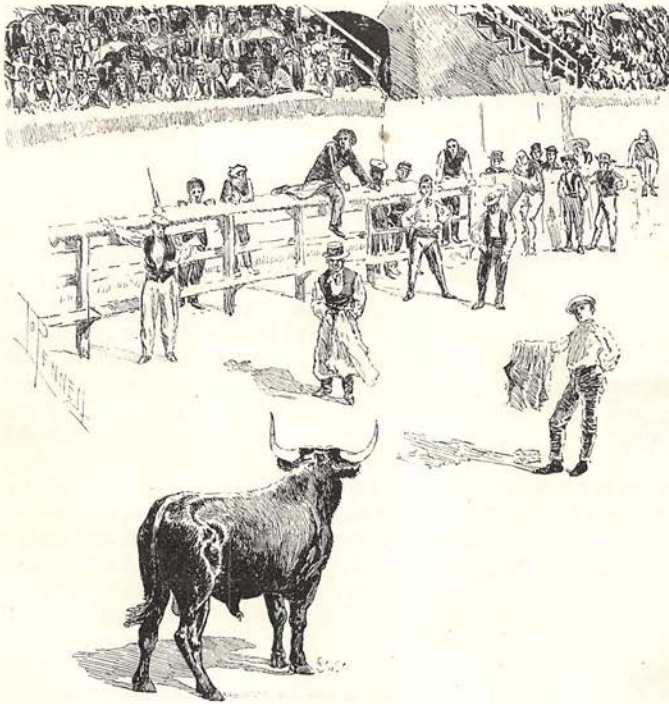


CLEARING THE RING.

headlong over the barrier. Two or three men, however, have climbed over from different corners, and the bull does not know which one to make for first. He tosses his head, shaking the little red rosette fastened by wires between his horns, which is worth fifty francs to him who can pull it off. But it must be taken while the bull is running, and not only is it securely fastened, but the bull has two enormous horns with which to defend it, and the men have not even big pins.

In a minute one of the light, active young fellows who has kicked off his slippers starts running towards the bull from behind. But the bull sees him before he has gone twenty yards,

jacket, makes straight for him. The man leaves for the nearest barrier, which is between five and six feet high, and over it with one hand he lightly vaults; and the bull, seeing that he cannot stop himself without breaking his horns against it, goes over it too. This same afternoon I saw three bulls take the barrier like horses. The minute the bull lands in the passage the amateurs take to the arena, leaving their hats, shoes, coats, or any other loose possessions, and with these the bull amuses himself, scattering them among the audience, who yell with delight, while he tears madly round until he comes to a gate, which is opened for him, into the arena. At the same moment the



"COME ON, TAUREAU."

wheels around, and makes straight for him with his head down. At the same moment two or three other men run towards him from different directions, yelling with all their might, and again he pauses for a moment, but then, almost immediately, goes directly for one in particular. The men all rush across in front of him like boys playing cross-tag; the man he is after swerves a little to one side, and, as the bull lowers his head to toss him, stops dead, puts his hand rapidly down with a backward movement, and snatches at the rosette, no bigger than a half-penny, while the bull, carried by his momentum, goes by him for a few yards. He turns at once, and, as the man has on a red

amateurs are all forced back into the passage. If the gate is not opened in time, the bull, as I saw him do, jumps back again.

"Ils sont sauvages, ces choses là," says the Parisian.

"Vous avez raison, Mosseu," replies the Provençal.

By this time the bull and the people have been chasing each other about for some fifteen minutes. No one is the worse for it, though all are a little tired. The bull does not try to jump any more. He has got his head, and he knows what he is about, and is too well trained to try to knock down a thick plank wall with his horns. Again the trumpet sounds. A great

shout goes up from the whole amphitheater: "You could n't get it! You could n't get it! Bully for the bull!" A gate opens. A jingling cow-bell sounds, and a merry cow comes galloping in. The cow trots, in the graceful manner peculiar to that beast, up to the bull.



AFTER THE FIGHT.

She lows at him. He bellows, and becomes gentle as a sucking dove. They calmly run round the ring, and then walk out side by side, while the people applaud. The first fight is over.

Recently I saw in the "Animal World," the journal of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, a tirade about the cruelty of these fights. There could not be a more mistaken idea. There is no cruelty about the Provençal fight. It is true that the bulls are excited in a way which I shall presently describe. But so long as tame stags are kept at Windsor to be let out of a box and chased into coal cellars and the back yards of Windsor and Staines, and harried to death in the middle of a pond in the park; so long as the nobility of England rear pheasants, tamer than chickens, and shoot them in a much more brutal manner than any pigeon match, and call it sport; so long as the London city magnates go hunting deer in Epping Forest; so long as the gentry start off, accompanied by all the dogs and Scotch serfs they can find, with a basket of champagne and a jug of whisky, and endeavor to shoot deer driven under their very nose, sometimes killing one another; so long as intelligent statesmen hunt hares and rabbits, and call it coursing, and are only willing to go into what they call sport when they can pursue something much weaker than themselves and

defenseless—just so long one cannot but feel that there is a good deal more courage required in those bull fights, where the bull has every advantage, than in British sport, which means certain death to the hunted and no harm to the sportsman. But let us return to our bulls.

The bulls are all kept in the old wild-beast cages. Another has been decorated with the cocarde, this time worth one hundred francs—no small prize to a soldier or a peasant. He has been led through a series of cages, one beyond the other, and each a little larger and a little wider than himself. On each side of these cages, which have no tops and are connected by sliding doors, sit two men armed with ten-foot tridents having very blunt prongs at the end. These, as they talk about what they ate for dinner last night, or the prospects of the vintage, or any of the other topics about which the French or the Italian peasant is forever talking, they calmly drop into the bull's back. Although the prongs are blunt and do not run into him or in any way injure him, they come down with sufficient force to make him savage, and he resents this treatment by jumping and kicking and bellowing. When he has been sufficiently maddened in the first box, the door is pulled aside, and he pushes forward just six feet. By the time the last door of the series of boxes is opened and he reaches the arena, although he is not hurt, he is perfectly furious. With a wild bellow and with head down he blindly makes for the group of amateurs. They scatter, all but one poor man who, paralyzed with fear, stands shaking alone in the middle of the arena. He trembles and seems almost ready to drop. There is a yell from the people. The bull strikes him, tossing him into the air, and he descends a shower of old newspapers and brightly colored rags, while the stick which held the scarecrow together rattles against the bull's horns.

Mad? Don't mention it! He only gives up those rags when he sees two amateurs who have almost snatched his cocarde. They start to cross each other, there is a crash of colliding heads, and over they tumble in the dust. The bull, with a bellow of triumph, dances and comes down, digging his horns into the dirt, and just removing the entire seat of one gentleman's breeches. The audience shout with glee and disappointment. The bull turns a somersault. The three squirm round on the ground together. The men get up, and the rate at which they leave the arena is remarkable. For the rest of the fifteen minutes the bull is literally monarch of all he surveys, and no one comes near him. Handkerchiefs, hats, and blouses are waved to him from over the barrier, but he takes no notice, and the people do not think it worth their while to come to him. They know that a bull that has been trained and kept in the

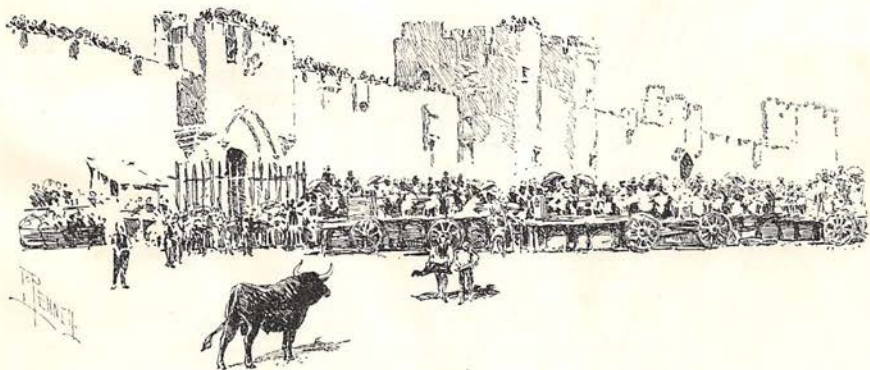
best condition simply for goring people is not to be trifled with. When the trumpet again sounds, and the old cow again enters, the bull departs, almost bowing right and left, for he is conscious that he deserves the "Bravo, taureau! Bravo, Rosau!"—for he is known by his name—which comes to him from every side.

As another enters, the band and the audience are just in the middle of the chorus of the *Boulangier March*, and as the glory of the *brave Général* resounds and rolls round the arena, the bull, who is evidently of the same mind as Clémenceau, endeavors to get at that band, which is some twenty feet above his head, with two barriers between. A man all in white, except for a fisherman's red cap, comes dancing like a jumping-jack out into the middle of the arena. This is too much for any bull. The man leaves, but the bull is coming too fast for the man to vault the barrier, and he nimbly jumps up on the stage, five feet above the ground, which surrounds the boxes. On this stage stands the mayor of Arles talking to the direction; there are also the *sous-préfet*, in his official sash, much too superior to talk to any one, the brigadier of gendarmes, in *chapeau* and epaulets and sword, a choice collection of the gentlemen of Arles, an American illustrator, and the two men with tridents. With one thrust the bull's head and horns go clear through the flimsy proscenium boards in front of the stage; with a bound he lands on top of it. But before he is fairly landed the stage is empty. The *sous-préfet* flies into the box from which the bull was liberated; the mayor, brigadier, and the direction disappear with little grace but much speed over the barrier at the back. The men with tridents drop them, and make for the arena. I have not much idea how I got there, but I found myself at the other end of the amphitheater in time to see the bull demolishing two or three scenic towns. He looked around, saw a Roman triumphal arch, proved to his own satisfaction that it was made only of pasteboard, and then slowly and

lumberingly jumped down in disgust, bellowed a few times, asking any one to come on who wished to, and, as no one answered the challenge, proceeded to make a light lunch off some hay which had fallen from somewhere. This he found so much more attractive than fighting that he refused to do anything else, and had to be led away by his attendant cow.

In ordinary accounts of bull-fights you hear of the sickening sight of disemboweled horses, and bleeding men, and butchered bulls. This went on with ever-changing fun, shouts, and laughter, but no one was either hurt or got the *cocardes*. Whoever thinks it is merely a joke to go down into one of these enormous arenas and snatch the tiny rosette from between the horns of a beast who has been trained all his life to keep him from getting it, will find that he has a large piece of work cut out for him. For fun the Provençal bull-fight beats a pantomime. For danger and expertness it is far ahead of anything I ever saw. As it goes on every Sunday in the summertime all over Provence, Frenchmen regard it as too common an affair to be worth description. Foreigners, never going there at the proper season,—the summer and autumn,—never or scarcely ever see it. And even down in La Camargue, on the banks of the Rhone, in little towns, all of which save Aigues-Mortes are unknown, the courses, like base-ball matches, are held every *fête-day*. They are the sport of the people, and have much more character in the small towns.

I went to several of these, and, though I do not doubt that foreigners may have attended them, I never saw one present. The bulls come into the towns in a drove, for they are perfectly quiet so long as they are kept together, guarded by two or three of the fine herdsmen of La Camargue, wrapped in their large cloaks, and carrying tridents. The peasants, who have come to the *fête* in their enormous country carts, form these into a ring, side by side, filling up the spaces between the wheels with hurdles,



ARENA AT AIGUES-MORTES.

old planks, wine casks, or anything that comes handy. They put two or three rows of chairs on top, and, behind these, with piles of wine casks topped with chairs they make an amphitheater, which is soon crowded with people. Everything is perfectly free, and the authorities offer one or two hundred francs in prizes, which, however, I never saw any one take. The bulls are as fierce as those at Arles, but the people are much more active than the Arlésiens, and the ring is much smaller. Instead of over a safety-barrier, the men have to jump into the carts, which have no sides and are almost breast-high; and a clean jump must be made, because a clumsy climb with the assistance of a pair of sharp horns would not be very pleasant. The principal delight of the young peasants is to entice the bull in the direction of a party of pretty girls, and to spring among them, upsetting chairs, girls, and themselves in a laughing, rolling heap at the bottom of the cart, apparently to their own great delight, and certainly to that of all the rest of the ring. Peaches, grapes, and new

wine circulate all round; I never knew any one to be hurt, and the whole place is filled with the smell of wine from the wine-presses with which the streets of all the villages are lined.

At the end of the course all the bulls are let loose; a curious fact about these beasts being that, while one bull by himself is a most savage animal, if two or three are put together they become as quiet as cows, and make a break for the open country, followed by the population of the village, shouting and screaming. After them come their keepers loaded down with huge baskets of grapes and new figs that the people have given them.

In the evening the whole population adjourns to the *place*: the town band plays in the center; the heroes over their sugar and water discuss their own bravery; the harvest moon of Provence hangs high in the sky; the scent of new wine is over everything; the song of the mosquito grows louder and louder, and before this untiring foe the Provençal at last beats a retreat.

Joseph Pennell.



AT THE CONCERT AFTER THE FIGHT.

RESTRAINT.

WOULD I might crown all joy and melody
 With one triumphant, flowering wreath of song,
 Woven with art and flung life's path along,
 To thrill a listening world with ecstasy.
 Would I might speak the thoughts that, like the sea
 Filling its hollow caves with murmurs long,
 Arise unbidden, musical, and strong —
 Flooding my stammering speech resistlessly.
 Would I might *act* and *live*, not dream and die;
 Move with the moving stars; glow with the sun;
 Fulfil my being's laws harmoniously:
 But ever are my noblest powers undone.
 An angel bars with flaming sword the gate
 Of life, and, at his stern command, I wait.

Margaret Crosby.