

Scene: The Realm of Fiction.

THE HERO AND HEROINE IN HEATED DISCUSSION.

THE HERO: I have sworn, before generations of readers, never to give you up. But I must say you are going too far!

THE HEROINE: I'm advancing, that's all. And you'll have to follow.

THE HERO: I've been following you ever since the world began. But you are so exasperating nowadays. I remember the dear old times when you wore white muslin and a rose in your hair, and used to sing ballads to me. You were always beautiful then, with starry eyes and luxuriant tresses; your shape had an elastic grace, and your features were cast in the rarest mold of symmetry. You leaned from moonlit balconies, wreathed with passion-flowers, while I serenaded you. Those were the days when I loved you fondly, madly, and *you* — you worshiped me!

THE HEROINE: True. I was too young to know better. I was always eighteen then, and now I am usually thirty. Besides, you were much nicer in those days — handsome and chivalrous, sometimes sublimely heroic, sometimes superbly bad and bold, but always a personage. Whereas now you don't amount to anything but to give me my cue.

THE HERO: You need n't twit me with it. I can't see how it has all happened. When I first remember you, back in Miss Burney's time, you were humble enough; you trembled and blushed when I looked at you, and nearly fainted with emotion when I held an umbrella over you in a shower. And under Harry Fielding you did n't dare to call your soul your own where I was concerned.

THE HEROINE: Oh, that was centuries ago, in the Dark Ages!

THE HERO: Well, then, take Thackeray. You were a trifle jealous and small-minded in his day, but then, how pretty you were, with your white shoulders, and pink cheeks, and ringlets! And how sweet and cheerful you looked as you sat by Dickens's fireside, with your dancing eyes and your dimples!

THE HEROINE: It is n't my fault that firesides have gone out; and one can't sit by a register. I tried hard to love you in Charlotte Brontë's time, I'm sure; but you trampled on me so that I got tired. And then George Eliot showed me what you really were, though she had a lingering weakness for you, too.

THE HERO: I thought her pretty severe then; but I've learned to submit. I've turned the other cheek so many times that I've none left now. Ah! if Charles Reade had only lived, I should n't be where I am today. When he wrote about you, you had n't much sense, but you were the loveliest creature, full of the sweetest inconsistencies and ignorances and caprices; and how you did worship me! It was too good to last. (*Sighing.*) I suppose you're perfectly satisfied with yourself nowadays. You ought to be. You've perfect health, undaunted courage to discuss and decide everything, a superlative intellect, and an unconquerable will. You bully me, you know you do.

THE HEROINE: Well, you deserve it. You're very bad and very weak. You are n't even handsome any more. And I am strong and sane and beautiful and

conquering. The star of progress is on my forehead. I carry the Future in my hand, and —

THE HERO: Do stop! You're not on exhibition at present. I've heard all that dozens of times, and I don't believe it. For one thing, you are not half as pretty as you used to be.

THE HEROINE: O-oh! (*hysterically*) you horrid thing! You mean wretch! I'm as beautiful as I ever was! — I'm the Eternal Womanly! — and I'll pay you up! (*Exit tempestuously.*)

THE HERO: Good gracious! What *is* she going to do next?

Priscilla Leonard.

"Wrap your Old Cloak about Me."

"THE black clouds drift about the hills,
The day is dying fast;
I fear for you, my sweet vourneen,
The long night's chilly blast."
"Nay, fear not; while true love is ours,
E'en poverty is blest:
Wrap your old cloak about me,
I'll sleep upon your breast."

"In dreams we'll roam the sunny fields,
We'll pluck the flow'rets fair,
We'll list the little singing birds,
Without a breath of care;
And when we wake, we'll wake to love;
Hope shall our hearts invest:
Wrap your old cloak about me,
I'll sleep upon your breast."

Jennie E. T. Dowe.

Anita.

SHE'S a pretty puss in boots,
With a saucy name that suits
Every glance.
Is it whispered, is it sung,
Still it ripples on the tongue
In a dance.

Oh, she walks so pit-a-pat,
And she talks of this and that
Such a way,
Just to watch her witching blush
Even Socrates would hush
Half a day.

She is not an angel; no!
They are out o' place below,
Let us grieve.
Yet perchance there is a wing
Hid beneath that puffy thing
Styled a sleeve.

Her singing makes me think
Of a tricky bobolink
All delight,
With his silver strain aflow
Where the apple-blossoms blow
Pink and white.

Like a wild rose, newly born,
Bursting into bloom at morn,
Dew a gleam,
So entrancing is her smile,
Lo, it haunts me all the while
In a dream.

Samuel Minturn Peck.