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### POETRY.

#### THE SEASONS.

Hailed by warblers on the wing,  
Wreathed with blossoms, cometh Spring,  
Lovely infant, doubly dear;  
Herald of the glowing year;  
Raised from nature's bed of death,  
Welcome is thy balmy breath,  
Like the first fond thrill of love,  
Ere its higher joys we prove.

Guarded by the rosy hours,  
Midst the breath and bloom of flowers,  
Like the rush of apt delight  
When two ardent hearts unite,  
In the chariot of the sun  
Cometh summer, gracious one!  
Field and forest, hill and stream,  
Radiant with her fervid beam.

Wafted on a bracing breeze,  
Midst a leaf-shower from the trees,  
O'er the purple heathy wold,  
Russet-grove, and field of gold,  
Greeted by the reaper's lay  
Autumn comes—beneath her sway  
Luscious fruits, nutritious grain,  
Load the tree and clothe the plain.

Riding on the tempest's car,  
Through a snow storm, fast and fair,  
O'er the troubled, foaming main,  
River bound in icy chain,  
Naked globe, and leafless wood,  
Winter comes, in burly mood,  
Surly, sullen, and austere,  
Frowns the patriarch of the year.

### Literature.

#### ABYSSINIAN FESTIVITIES OF EASTER.

(From Major Harris's new work, 'The Highlands of Ethiopia'.)

Easter Day, instead of being celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox, is by the Christians of Abyssinia kept one lunation later. On its recurrence, countless crowds, decked out in their gayest apparel, filled every avenue and enclosure of the palace; and long files of slaves, with jars, baskets, and trenchers, hurrying to and fro from the kitchens and magazines, proclaimed the extensive nature of the preparations making for the regal entertainment.

At eight o'clock, the doors of the great hall were thrown open, and a burst of wild music from the royal band, ushered in the company to a spacious bar-like apartment, the dingy aspect of which formed a strong contrast to the galaxy of light that illumines regal hospitality in Europe. Holding high festival to the entire adult population of the metropolis, who for six weeks past had subsisted on cow-kail and stinging nettles, the king reclined in state within a raised alcove, furnished with the wonted velvet cushions and tapestries, and loaded with silver ornaments—the abridgment of ancient Ethiopian magnificence. Priests, nobles, warriors, baalooms, and pages, stood around the throne, which was flanked by a long line of attendants, bearing straight silver falchions of antique Roman model, belonging to the different churches. Bull hides carpeted the floor; and the lofty walls of the chamber, although destitute of architectural decoration, were hung throughout with a profusion of richly-embazoned shields, from each of which depended a velvet scarf or cloak of every hue and colour in the rainbow.

A low horse-shoe table of wicker-work, supported upon basket pedestals, extended the entire length of the hall. Thin unleavened cakes of sour teff, heaped one upon the other, served as platters. Mountains of wheaten bread, piled in close contiguity, and strewed with fragments of stewed fowls, towered two and three feet above the surface of the groaning board. Bowls containing a decoction of red pepper, onions, and grease, were flanked by long-necked decanters of old mead; and at short intervals stood groups of slaves carrying baskets crammed with reeking collops of raw flesh, just severed from the newly-slain carcass.

Taking their seats in treble rows upon the ground, the crowded guests were each provided with his own knife, fashioned like a reaping-hook, and serving him equally in the battle-field and at the banquet. Four hundred voracious appetites, whetted by forty days of irksome abstinence, were constantly ministered to by fresh arrivals of quivering flesh from the court-yard, where oxen in quick succession were being thrown down and slaughtered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Barillés and capacious horns filled with hydromel of intoxicating age were rapidly drained and replenished under the eye of the monarch; and strings of eunuchs, with the females pertaining to the royal kitchen, clad in gala dresses and striped cotton robes, passed and repassed continually with interminable supplies of bread, to rebuild the demolished fabric on the uprising of each satiated group.

Again the great doors were thrown open, and another set entered, amid the increasing din. Harpers and fiddlers played, danced and sang with untiring perseverance; and ever and anon one of the king's female chorists lifted up her shrill voice with the most extravagant panygyric on the hospitality and munificence of her royal master, or burst forth into unqualified eulogy on the liberality of his British guests.

The royal band, which occupied the space vacant in the centre between the tables, is composed of simple reeds of various lengths and sizes—the *inbilta* having a perforation to which the lips are applied as in the flute, whilst the *milhut* is fashioned after the form of a trombone. No performer possesses above one pipe, nor, like the Russian, is he master of more than one note. Tune there is none—each playing according to the dictates of his own taste, unguided by any musical scale; but after the harsh blasts of the trumps, the symphony falls soft upon the ear, like the wild cadence of a Pan's pipe blown over by the wind; and it was on this occasion curiously contrasted with the deep thunder of the *kubbero*, which pealed without intermission from the secret apartments of the Queen.

As the day drew on to its close, the riotous mirth of uncontrolled festivity waxed louder and louder within the palace walls, whilst quarrels and drunken brawls

prevailed throughout the city. The carousal continued until dark, by which time the bones of three hundred and fifty steers had been picked—countless measures of wheat had been consumed—and so many hogsheds of potent old hydromel had been drained to the dregs, that, saving the royal and munificent host, scarcely one sober individual, whether noble or plebeian, was any where to be seen. It is indeed a fortunate circumstance for the foreigner, that the nation, with their present crude instruments, is not infected with a musical mania. Melody has hardly recovered from the throes of a most protracted labour; and her deformed bantling having not yet acquired sufficient strength to exert his lungs as a public nuisance, the silence of night is rarely disturbed by the sleep-dispelling minstrelsy which closed the festivities of the Abyssinian Easter.

The British embassy, on horse-back, were marshalled to a gay Turkish pavilion, which had been purposely erected below the royal inspection tower—a small roofed building, resembling a sentry-box, or the judge's stand on a country race-course, occupying a raised platform immediately within the palace enclosure. Gay cloth hangings enveloped this cage, and carpets and rugs of all colours covered the top of the rude wall, for some distance on either side. The usual paraphernalia of silver-embossed velvet floated at the king's feet. The chiefs of the churches, and the civil officers of state—a gorgeous band—were arranged along the platform, whilst a motley crowd of many thousand spectators stood closely packed over the plain below.

Dense masses of cavalry were in readiness at the further extremity of the parade, to perform the pageant of the day. At the distance of one hundred yards from the imperial stand, a stack of tall leafless willow staves towered over the bright green turf which extended far and wide in front. Around it were squatted files of warriors, ensconced under their round shields like the tortoise beneath his shell—the charge of sundry huge culverins, of inordinate dimensions, being divided betwixt every three. The muzzle rested over the shoulder of one, a second worked the butt, and a third was prepared, with blazing brand, to fire on the signal given.

The review commenced by the advance of the body guard, consisting entirely of fusiliers. Divided into four bodies, consisting each of about one hundred men, they moved slowly forward, shouting the usual war chorus, in imitation of the voice of the lion, and were kept in line by the vigorous application of the rattan. Numerous bangles, the reward of distinguished gallantry, glittered throughout the band, and the fixed bayonets, heretofore unknown in Southern Abyssinia, gleamed brightly in the sunshine. Gaining the prescribed distance, the warriors crouched on the ground, as if to receive cavalry. A grey-headed but energetic veteran sprang to the front, danced during some time in a variety of uncouth capers, and, uttering a howl such as might be conjectured to issue from the lungs of the demon in the wolf's glen, discharged his piece. The signal was followed by a running fire along the entire line, when the remaining companies, advancing in succession in the same order, performed the same evolutions, and all marched off, dancing and singing, to the outer ring.

The Master of the Horse next advanced with his glittering squadron of picked household cavalry—the flower of the Christian lances. He was arrayed in a parti-coloured vest, surmounted by a crimson Arab floccy, handsomely studded with silver jets. A gilt embossed gauntlet encircled his right arm from the wrist to the elbow. His targe and horse-trappings glittered with a profusion of silver crosses and devices, and he looked a stately and martial warrior curvetting at the head of his tried troop of well-appointed lancers.

Forming line at the distance of half a mile, and approaching the willow pile with a musical accompaniment from a mounted band of kettle-drums, the squadron halted, and the leader, couching his lance, advanced in front. Whilst putting his well-broken charger through all the evolutions of Abyssinian *manège*, he vaunted his prowess in arms, recited the prodigies of valour performed in the service of his royal master, and proclaimed his continued good faith and future bold intentions—his followers, at intervals, like the Romans of old, responding their assent by the loud clatter of lance against shield. The harangue concluded, his spears were dashed upon the ground, and the chieftain, drawing his broad two-edged falchion, brandished it in the air: "Tock-attoo, Loola, Loola, Gummo, Sik, Ooooh," he vociferated, as he dashed his heels into the flank of the prancing steed. An instantaneous howl, and independent discharge of culverins, answered the signal, and the wild troop swept past at a gallop to the further extremity of the parade.

Thirteen governors, clothed in spoils stripped from the lion and the leopard, with other conspicuous trophies of the chase, passed successively in order of review. Decked in emblems of blood—rings, bracelets, and gauntlets, with shining coronets and chains of silver, streaming from their clotted hair—tokens all of individual prowess in hand to hand combat with the king's foes, the leader of each glittering cohort indulged in a long rambling harangue, ere shouting the signal for the charge. Many there were who wore the *akodama*—a massive transverse beam of silver projecting across the brows, and hung with a profusion of chains and pendants, the reward for the slaughter of a Mahomedan of the low country.

An interesting, though perhaps not a very military, sight was witnessed as the hours drew on. The famished governors, judges, chiefs, nobles, courtiers, and dignitaries of the church, who occupied the elevated platform on either side of the royal box, unable longer to resist the calls of hunger, were suddenly to be perceived in the act of employing their crooked swords in reducing the dimensions of several sides and flaps of raw beef, furnished by the king's munificence, and ostentatiously displayed by as many menials—nor, under the well-directed and vigorous attacks of the assembly, were the reeking collops long in disappearing.

A few only of the detachments, whose leaders were not gifted with eloquence, charged past without a halt from the ground on which they had formed; and it is

not improbable that these, having made the circuit of the palace enclosure, now swelled the pageant by appearing a second time on the stage. Others, dismounting, performed various evolutions on foot—ancient heroes with gleaming falchions of truly portentous dimensions capering and striding before the line, until, on a signal made by the culverins, they vaulted again into the saddles, and dashed onward over the greensward, now fast fading under the tramp of hoofs.

Last of all came the tall martial figure of Abogaz Mar-etch, chief of all the tributary Galla in the South, at the head of his Abidchu legion, who closed the display of barbarian tactics. Three thousand in number, the sea of wild horsemen moved in advance to the music of the kettle-drums, their arms and decorations flashing in the sun-beam, and their ample white robes and long sable braided hair streaming to the breeze. At the shrill whoop of their warlike leader, with the rushing sound of a hurricane, the glittering cohort clattered past the royal stand, and the moving forest of lances disappeared under a cloud of dust.

From eight to ten thousand cavalry were present in the field, and the spectacle, which lasted from nine in morning until five in the afternoon, was exceedingly wild and impressive. Did the warriors who this day recounted their valorous achievements before the monarch possess hearts of a measure with their good weapons and strong spears, they could not fail to prove the means of extensive power and conquest under the control of an aspiring chief; but such, unfortunately, is not the case, and the speed of the stout hardy steeds that they bestrode is too frequently exerted in the wrong direction.

The ceremony of burning the stack of willow staves commenced shortly after this exhibition, and, superintended by his Majesty in person, terminated the proceedings of the busy day. Shrouded from the rude gaze of the populace under the nocturnal veil, the ladies of the royal harem danced and clapped their hands together, as their white ghostlike figures moved in circling procession around the pile so shortly to be committed to the flames. Then followed a rush of torch-bearers from various quarters, mingled with the corps of Aferoch, and all reeling under the effects of strong old hydromel. Three hundred flower-decked fasses, displayed bright and fresh in the morning, but now withered and faded, were with savage shouts and yells cast simultaneously on the pyre, and a burst of lurid glare, which revealed all that was passing, at once proclaimed their ignition. Thousands crowding round the fast-increasing blaze, added their tribute, and joined in the din of voices. Black crosses to repel the Devil were described on the forehead with the charred wood, in the struggle to obtain which hard blows were dealt lustily about, and many of the competitors were even forced into the pile. The legend asserts that on the discovery of the Holy Cross by the mother of Constantine the Great, she caused beacon fires to be lighted on all the high hills of Palestine, upon beholding which a general shout of joy was raised by the people of Constantinople. In imitation hereof, wild songs and yells of triumph from the inebriated Christians of Shoa now completed the turmoil and confusion, and with the crackling red flames that curled up the tall dry staves, ascended high into the starry vault of heaven in honour of Saint Helena.

#### THE SULTAN AND HIS VIZIER.

An eastern sultan, who was far from being a tyrant in his general way, got one day very much out of temper. All the courtiers kept aloof as soon as they saw clouds on the visage of the Brother of the Sun; but one careless attendant came near him abruptly, and committed some slight offence. His highness broke out into a torrent of rage, and ordered the offender to receive the bastinado forthwith, and then to be impaled in front of the great gate of the place.

"Lord of the faithful!" said his honest vizier, "let the fulfilment of thy commands be delayed, while I relate thee a story." The sultan gave a mute, surly sign of assent, whereupon the vizier began to relate the following tale, for which, he it remarked, he drew on his invention, not on memory:

"A wealthy and benevolent mussulman had a slave whom he wished to make happy, so he gave him his freedom, and presented him, moreover, with a good ship, loaded with costly merchandize. The bondman, now free from his fetters, set sail joyfully for his native country; but suddenly a storm arose, and flung him on the shore of an uninhabited island. His vessel went to pieces, and he was left to bemoan his sad fate on the desert beach. At first, he saw no traces of human abode, but, as he left the shore and journeyed further on, he saw the walls and towers of a large city in the distance. Joyfully he bent his steps toward it, and hardly had he reached the gates, when he was welcomed with shouts of joy. Countless multitudes of the inhabitants surrounded him, bowed their faces to the dust, and cried, as with one voice, 'long live our sultan.' The poor ship-wrecked freedman besought them not to make sport of his misery; but he was assured by the rejoicing multitude, that these honors were paid him in sober earnest. Spite of his struggles, he was lifted by force into a splendid chariot, and conducted to a place glittering with gold and jewels. Here he was dressed by officious attendants in royal robes, while a crowd of grave dignified-looking old men, who declared themselves to be the great officers of state, did him homage as their sovereign, and vowed eternal fidelity. So, whether he liked it or not, rule he must. He was little used, as your highness may imagine, to managing the affairs of a great people, and would have cut but a sorry figure, had it not been for a wise and aged vizier, who always gave him prudent counsels to aid his inexperience.

"Tell me, vizier," so the monarch, not long afterwards, addressed his sage adviser, "tell me how it is that I, a poor friendless stranger, have been made a great king, and let me know when this mummery is to end!"

"Mighty sultan," said the vizier, "all the inhabitants of the island, whom thou takest for men, are only spirits." The king shuddered under his royal robes, but said nothing, and the vizier proceeded. "We are, however,

always under the government of a mortal, who is sent us, from time to time, by the great Lord of all, to rule over us. As soon as he lands among us, he is appointed our future ruler, and we are told, at the same time, how long he is to wear the crown. This, however, is never told our sultan until the appointed time comes when he is to lay down his dignity. When that time comes, he is suddenly dethroned, dressed in a coarse and unsightly garment, and carried away to a barren desert island."

The sultan trembled once more from head to foot, and asked if his predecessors had been told, like him, what a sad fate awaited them.

"They were all told of it," said the wise vizier, "but they made no good use of their knowledge. They enjoyed the pleasure of the moment, without thinking of the future. So the time for their dethronement came upon them before they had made the slightest preparation for rendering their future life in the desert island an agreeable one."

"Why, can that be done?" asked the astonished sultan.

"Surely it can," was the answer. "No one hinders thee from now, at this very moment, beginning to plant a colony on the barren island, which is to be thy future habitation. If thou doest this, its barrenness will be changed to beauty, thou wilt be joyfully received when thou goest to dwell upon it, and never regret the splendor thou hast left behind thee. But hasten, hasten, if such is thy intention! Feeble man is master of the present moment only—the coming one belongs to destiny."

"The prudent Sultan did not, like his predecessors, turn a deaf ear to the warning voice of his good vizier; without loss of time he sent a large number of his best and most valuable subjects to the desert island, and commanded them to prepare a pleasant retreat for him against his coming. Therefore, when he was dethroned, and forced, as others had been, to visit the abode of barrenness, he found it fertile, and pleasant to look upon, and full of blooming flowers and sweet fragrance; and there he lived forever in cheerfulness and peace, for he knew that this was his final resting-place, and that he had no further change or accident to fear. And here my tale endeth," said the vizier, and was silent.

"And what is the meaning of all this," said the caliph, impatiently; "what is the hidden meaning of thy long-winded story? It contains, I suppose, some useful moral reflection; but, if it does, it is so carefully concealed, that I cannot find it. Speak more clearly!"

"Know then," said the vizier, "the rich and benevolent man is God; the slave, to whom he gave freedom, a newly-born mortal; the island on which he lands, which he, at first, thought uninhabited, the world; his advisers, wisdom; the time of his government, his life, and the barren island to which he is banished the other world. The colonists he is permitted to send into it, to beautify it, are the good works that he performs in this life, and the careless rulers are those who get drunk with the pleasures of this life, without thinking on that which is to come. And now, commander of the faithful, suffer me likewise to point out the application of my story. During the period of thy government, thou hast sent many colonists before thee to make green the face of the desert island which is thy appointed resting place; but all the labor they have performed will be in vain, if thou shouldst take the life of a true and faithful servant for a trifling matter. Forgive him, even as thou hopest in God that he will one day forgive thee!"

This bold remonstrance induced the caliph to lay aside his anger, and pardon his innocent servant.—Translated from the German, for the New York Mirror.

#### SHORT REMARKS ON MEN AND THINGS.

(From Macnish's "Book of Aphorisms".)

Those who are most ardently solicitous of obtaining praise, and make the greatest efforts to attain it, are generally less successful than those who give themselves no trouble about the matter. The latter often do unconsciously what procures this kind of incense; while the extreme care and anxiety of the former very often defeat the purpose they have in view—so perversely do people refuse a man what he longs for, and give him what he is indifferent about.

Persons with small, fine, compressed lips, have generally much sensitiveness of character, accompanied with great irritability, and a tendency to be finical and particular.

Never judge of a man's honesty or talents by the certificates he produces. Such documents are just as likely—or rather much more so—to be false as true. The greatest knave can at all times obtain them in proof of his integrity; and any illiterate blockhead may by their means make himself appear one of the most learned and accomplished men of the age. No degree of knavery or stupidity is the least bar in the way of obtaining the most splendid and unqualified testimonials.

One of the greatest mysteries is the expression of the human eye. It depends upon something beyond mere organisation, for I have seen the eyes of two persons which in their structure and colour were, apparently, quite the same, and yet the ocular expression of each individual was perfectly different. Some owe the expression of their countenance chiefly to the eyes, others to the mouth; nor is it, upon the whole, easy to say which feature is the most expressive. The intellect, I believe, is more especially communicated by the eyes, and the feelings by the mouth. I never knew a man of imaginative genius who had not fine eyes.

It has been the occasion of surprise to many, that Switzerland, the most romantic country in Europe, has never produced a poet. They imagine that the scenery should generate poetry in the minds of the inhabitants; but this is confounding the cause with the effect. It is not the scenery which makes the poet, but the mind of the poet which makes poetry of the scenery. Holland, perhaps the tamest district in the world, has produced some good poets; and our own immortal Milton was born and brought up amid the smoke of London. Spenser, the most fanciful of poets, was also a Cockney.

In the modern education of children, too much time is devoted to the cultivation of the mind, and too little to