

banquet of life. Throw down the barriers which separate you. Except those of intelligence and morality, suppress all the privileges which render you hostile or envious. Make yourselves equal, as far as it can be done. And that not only because human nature has everywhere the same rights, but because you can elevate men only by elevating man, by raising their idea of life, which the spectacle of inequality tends to lower. All inequality brings after it a proportional amount of tyranny: wherever there has been a slave, there has also been a master; both distorting and corrupting in all those who see them the idea of life. This idea can only be pure and complete where, taken in all its aspects, it offers nothing abject, nothing vicious, nothing maimed. The Spartans diverted education from its true purposes, and condemned their republic irreversibly to death, on the day when to teach their children temperance they showed them a drunken Helot; as we divert it from its purpose when, to teach the inviolability of life, we show to our youth an assassin slain upon the scaffold by society. When all men shall commune together by their families, by property, by the exercise of a political function in the state, by education—family, property, country, humanity will become more holy than they now are. When the arms of Christ, even yet stretched out on the cross, shall be loosened to press the whole human race in one embrace—when there shall be no more pariahs nor brahmins, nor servants nor masters, but only men—we shall adore the great name of God with much more love and faith than we do now."

This is democracy in its essentials, if it is not a petty revolt, a reaction able perhaps to destroy, but impotent to reconstruct. I know no one bold enough, corrupt enough, to protest against such a programme. But if this programme is indeed that of democracy, is it that of the majority of democrats? Are they, generally speaking, on a level with their cause in their starting point, in the object they aim at? I think not; and I propose to show this by reviewing the principal schools which guide the movement. It may be well, after fifty years of struggles, of victims, of sacrifices, to consider a little where we are, to reconnoitre the ground well, and to examine whether we have not chanced to go astray.

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF MISS CUSHMAN'S "ROMEO."

I asked a lady, on her return from the Haymarket Theatre one evening, what was her opinion of Miss Cushman's performance of *Romeo*. The answer I received was, a pause, a light laugh, and—"Oh, Miss Cushman is a very dangerous young man." The lady's manner recalled to my mind those words of Racine—

Car la parole est toujours supprimée  
Quand le sujet surmonte le disant.\*

I felt curious to see this actress, and went to the theatre the next time she played *Romeo*. At first I was struck by her likeness to Macready, both in person and manner; afterwards I became convinced that this likeness was entirely the work of nature; and that Miss Cushman does not imitate Macready.

\* For our words are always suppressed  
When feeling transcends expression.

Before the close of the second act the conviction was forcibly borne in upon my mind that this was not a *clever woman merely*, but one that comes before the world in a more questionable shape—a *woman of genius*. Wanting in harmony, perhaps—in that lowest sort of harmony which is *soothing* to the mental faculties—but endowed with another and a far higher harmony, which rouses them beyond their ordinary quickness, and dilates them beyond their ordinary compass; a harmony like that in Beethoven's wildest passages, which are a wonder and a mystery, and a most vehement discord to the vulgar ear, but which speak the veriest heaven-music to the "fit audience."

Judging of her as an individual from her appearance on the stage, I should say that she is irregular, inharmonious, vehement, awkward—thus, *in one sense*, unfeminine: that she is grand, large-souled, and strong-passioned; a scorner of petty vanity, earnest, unconscious, and full of rich tenderness that lies not on the surface—thus, *in another sense*, unfeminine.

What Carlyle says of Cromwell's personal appearance may be said of Miss Cushman's—she is not "beautiful, not at all beautiful to the man-milliner species." Her voice is deep-toned, and with that *timbre sonore* which a high authority tells us is not the "most excellent thing in woman." Her figure, her gait, her gestures, are manly; at least, they are so in *Romeo*. Had I not known that the part was played by a woman, I do not think I should have suspected her sex. Whether all this be the effect of the transmuting power of genius, I know not, but am inclined to believe that it is. I should not be at all surprised to see her play *Juliet* as well as she plays *Romeo*—to see her womanised into the impassioned girl.

With regard to the character of *Romeo*, it is one that has been neglected for many years; I believe since Charles Kemble gave it up for that of *Mercutio*—when *Mercutio* became the first male character in the play. Miss Cushman has made *Romeo* a first-rate part, as Shakspeare made it, equal in interest and power to that of *Juliet*; which has always been filled by great actresses, and considered a touchstone of excellence in a peculiar department of acting.

In Miss Cushman's personation of *Romeo*, she gives all the vehemence, the warmth of passion, the melancholy, the luxuriant imagination, the glowing yet delicate vitality, the quick, lightning splendour of the Italian boy-lover. This is the *Romeo* of Shakspeare, is it not? She presents to us this youth, so graceful, fiery, and rich in tenderness; and makes us see him *beautiful* with the passionate beauty of a southern clime. But—yes, there is a *but* in my admiration of Miss Cushman's embodiment of the character which Shakspeare drew. She has not omitted anything Shakspeare created, but she has added somewhat.

To the southern temperament and its characteristics, as shown by *Romeo*, Miss Cushman unites the strong earnestness of purpose, the steadiness of will and the power to work out that will in spite of all obstacles, which belong to the northern nations. There is English or German *steadiness* below the Italian passion in every look and movement.

Hence came to my mind a perception of inconsistency. Had the real *Romeo* looked, moved, and spoken, as Miss Cushman looks, moves, and speaks, at the opening of the piece, when he is in love with *Rosaline*, there would be no play of *Romeo and Juliet*. His love for *Rosaline* would be based on surer ground than mere fairness of

external form. Being thus based, he could and would strive earnestly to raise himself nearer to the excellence he adored. He would suffer during his probation, as none but passionate and affectionate natures can suffer, from "hope deferred," but he would wait—ay, years, if needful—till *Rosaline* should "grace for grace, and love for love allow," which she would do most assuredly, were she the noble being *Romeo* supposes. *Rosaline*, like all living things, must love "after her kind;" and *Romeo*, Miss Cashman's *Romeo*, is of the best, the most noble kind—that which is gracious, loving, strong. Yes, the lady was right—"Miss Cushman is a very dangerous young man."

J. M. W.

### WHO WAS DENTATUS?

As this is a question which will probably be asked by some of the readers of the *People's Journal*, to whom the means and the opportunity for a perusal of the classics has been denied, perhaps I may be allowed to say a few words on the subject of the engraving from poor Haydon's fine painting of the death of this illustrious Roman, given at page 57.

I have called Sicinius, or, as he is sometimes termed, Sicius Dentatus, illustrious; and so in truth he was, and is, notwithstanding that little is known of him, save that for the space of forty years he was actively engaged in the dreadful work of slaughter and destruction carried on by the armies of Rome. He is said to have been present in one hundred and twenty-one battles, and to have obtained fourteen civic crowns, three mural crowns, eight crowns of gold, eighty-three golden collars, sixty bracelets, eighteen lances, and twenty-three horses with all their ornaments, as rewards for his uncommon services: he could point to the scars of forty-five wounds, all on the breast, and received principally while defending the Capitol against the Sabines, and proudly say—"Here, Romans, are the marks of my adherence to the Great Republic, our common mother; here, deeply engraven around my heart, in unmistakable characters, are the evidences of my life-long fidelity and devotion to her interests and her laws!" It was thus that he might have said, and perhaps did say, when amid the rude clamours of a people incensed beyond endurance by the exactions and tyrannical acts of Appius Claudius and his fellow Decemvirs, he stood up before those haughty patricians, to enumerate his wounds and his services, and to claim for himself, and those of his plebeian order, a share in the division of land won from the enemy, a fuller recognition of their rights, and a more due consideration of their wants and wishes, from those who had constituted themselves their lords and rulers. Here we have the old story, the prominent characteristic of every epoch of the world's history—irresponsible power improperly and wrongfully used for the benefit of its possessors, the *few*; and the struggles of the down-trodden *many* to relieve themselves of the intolerable load of oppression beneath which they groan and suffer:—the old story of insurrection, and tumult, and bloodshed resulting from the opposition offered by selfishness, and cupidity, and pride, to the progress of popular improvement, and the full development of the grand principles of man's equality, and God's eternal justice. Agrarian tumults, Magna Charta insurrections, French revo-

lutions, Anti-Corn-law agitations, and other movements and upheavings of the ground-works of society, have all this common origin; their different degrees of violence and forms of operation are but the modifications of time and circumstances; to-day it is the moral power and steadfast courage of a people, determined yet patient, earnest and energetic, yet unwilling to shed blood or to destroy property, that shall give the victory over wrong and oppression; yesterday it was physical force and impetuous valour—threats, and denunciations, and sturdy blows—only that could be employed with advantage to the popular cause; and especially was this the case in the old time of pagan darkness, when martial qualities were those held in greatest esteem; when valour and virtue were considered synonymous terms, and bodily strength was of more account than intellectual and moral power. Then it was that Dentatus flourished, and the Roman Achilles, as he was called from his uncommon bravery, was of that age one of the most illustrious. And here we see him, like a lion at bay, selling his life as dearly as may be, and bestrewing the rocky defile into which he had been enticed, under a vain pretence, with the bleeding forms of his adversaries, a body of one hundred assassins in the pay of the Decemviri, to whom his popularity and freedom of speech had rendered him odious. So, with his back to the mountain, and his scarred breast and weather-stained, time-wrinkled face turned towards his foes, stands the aged, but yet athletic and undaunted veteran; swords flash around him, and javelins, thick as hail, are showered upon his ever-extended shield; he has surrounded himself with a wall of dead and wounded, fifteen of the latter, and thirty of the former, attesting that his resolution is as undaunted, his eye as quick, and his arm as vigorous, as ever; but now on his devoted head huge masses of the rock above him, detached and hurled by the hands of some of his cowardly assailants, begin to fall; he sinks, and dies the victim of treachery most foul, and malice most detestable: he, the favourite tribune of the people; he, the bold denouncer and opposer of the proud and arbitrary Decemviri; he, the patriot and the true man, who had fought Rome's battles, and borne himself so nobly and uprightly according to the light that was within him and around him, here perished miserably, as a wild beast caught in the toils of the hunters, without one friendly voice to cheer him in his death-struggle, one sympathising eye to look upon his last agonies, or one gentle arm to raise and protect his mangled remains, which, oh, mockery of mockeries! were afterwards, by the order of those who had caused his death, placed on the funeral car, and conveyed with all the pomp and circumstance of military honour to their final resting-place. But the people were not deceived by this pretended grief for the loss of a brave citizen, and feigned respect for his memory, by which their rulers hoped to blind them to the truth; their hatred and desire for vengeance was but increased by this act of duplicity, and soon after the corrupt and tyrannical Decemviri, having filled up the measure of their iniquity, were driven from their high places, and forced to render up into other hands that power of which they had made so bad a use. Appius Claudius, a name rendered infamous by its connection with the untimely death of the beautiful Virginia, and another of the deposed ten, called Oppius, destroyed themselves in prison, and the remaining eight went into voluntary exile, to escape the consequences of

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