son's rendition of the following scene, replete as it was with tragic force, is not likely to be soon forgotten. Her breathless bursting through the crowd to reach the side of her brother; her dull, mute despair at the unlooked-for curse of the dying man; her agonized denial of the vile names he heaps upon her; her crouching in the dust, white and calm, as if half stunned, and only partly comprehending what was passing around her; and, finally, her pushing of Siebel's proffered arm to one side, and, with eyes dilated with horror, mechanically following the corpse as it is removed—all constitute a piece of acting superb in its fidelity to Nature.

Lucca enters the scene, tranquilly resting on the shoulder of Siebel. The fact that the wounded man is her brother she discovers suddenly, and she flies to his assistance. Then, during the curse, she kneels, begs, prays—every thing—for forgiveness. Her acting is deeply pathetic, but it gives no such impression of horror as is conveyed by that of Nilsson—nor does her slow exit, leaning as before upon Siebel, seem to be in accordance with her previous state of extreme mental agony.

Within the chapel, in spite of the fiats of the majority of critics to the contrary, in our humble opinion, the acting of Nilsson is again superior. Lucca kneels or rather crouches on the outskirts of the crowd, prayer-book in hand. To her rendition of the music, the harmony indicating intense grief and despair, we can take no exception, but we may venture to suggest that the rapid fluttering of the leaves of the missal, without a single glance at its contents, and the too constant use of a handkerchief to remove tears, might be toned down more in accordance with reality. In a word, so far from this portion of Lucca's characterization being the strongest, we consider it the weakest, simply because it is overdone. Nilsson, in the same scene, rose to sublimity, and her acting, during the mockery of Mephisto, was painfully faithful.

The interview in Marguerite's cell, ending with her death, closes the opera. In the beginning of this act Nilsson again shows the greater *artiste*. The detached bits of melody, crooned by the crazed girl, are given in a weird manner, exquisite in its depth of pathos. But then comes the magnificent outburst of prayer, and here Lucca more than eclipses her rival. Her utter *abandon*, her fervid pouring forth of the grand music in the full strength of her thrilling voice, fittingly concludes' an impersonation which, though not without its faults, bears evidence of transcendent genius

Even a closer analysis than that which we have endeavored to give will, we think, fail to determine of which of these two great singers the conception of the part of Gretchen is the most true to life. There is but one distinction to be made: the spiritual against the earthly; the innocence of an existence all but angelic against the simplicity of a pure but human woman. The question is a difficult one to decide, as it appeals not to general opinion but to individual taste. In giving us a strange, weird interpretation of the fancy of a great poet, in affording us an impersonation which touches most strongly the æsthetic in our nature, Nilsson undoubtedly succeeds; on the other hand, for a Marguerite such as we might meet in our daily walks of life, for a truthful representation of a character inspired with but one thought, and that true, hearty, womanly love, to Lucca should be awarded our largest meed of praise.

PARK BENJAMIN.

REMINISCENCE OF FORESTI, THE ITALIAN PATRIOT.

AMONG the persons of interest, whom I met in New-York City early in 1845, was Mr. FELICE E. FORESTI, the Italian patriot. His liberal political principles, the great sufferings he had endured, and his unblemished moral character, made him a favorite in society. At that time everybody had read "My Prisons," by Silvio Pellico, and Foresti was intimately associated with that most lovely character, whose indomitable struggles to maintain the serenity of his soul, and the integrity of his intellect, under an imprisonment that might have been fatal to a less determined mind, invested his companions in suffering with a tender interest. Maroncelli, with his pale, noble brow, limping upon his crutch, and toiling for his bread in life-long exile, was less frequently seen in the social circle than Foresti, who was of a more robust constitution, and without any family ties, whereas Maroncelli was attended by his mother in his exile.

When I first saw Foresti he was very bald, and his hair nearly white. Twelve years of imprisonment had left their sad record upon him, in the shape of deep horizontal lines across his brow, and a touching sadness in the expression of his face. At first sight I thought him a very old man, though his age was only about fifty years at the time, but, as I saw more of him, he impressed me as being an overgrown boy. Warm, impulsive, simple-hearted, he never cared, or, it may be, was unable to adjust himself to conventional rules, and hence he moved and talked just in his own way, which was often awkward, but always pleasant and interesting. He was not a man of genius, as was his friend and companion-in-arms, Silvio Pellico, but, enthusiastic and sensitive, he probably suffered more from this very absence of resource.

Twenty years ago literary people had cultivated the art of conversation, and were not ashamed to give noble expression to noble thoughts, and were gratified when surrounded with a group of good listeners. If this be called vanity, it was of a very harmless kind.

One evening at a party at Miss Lynch's (now Madame Botta), Foresti, Charles F. Hoffman, and Henry T. Tuckerman, were engaged in an animated conversation together, to which I was a silent listener. Tuckerman, as well as N. P. Willis, had both spent many years in Italy, and were enthusiasts in Italian scenery, and glowing skies, and impulsive men and women. I own I do not greatly admire the latter quality, having seen it in dangerous and disagreeable combinations. The three talkers were all large men, six feet in height, but very unlike in the qualities of their minds. Foresti said:

"Italy sleeps, bound by triple cords—Austrian rule, the despotism of the Church, and her own fickleness—but her sons are learning the secret of her bondage, and she will at length awake."

"I think the devotion of Italians to art is an obstacle to political power," rejoined Tuckerman; "and then the seductiveness of the climate induces a tendency to inertness and reverie."

"And yet," replied Hoffman, "it nurtured the old Romans. I think there is a latent force, a smouldering fire, that must eventually break forth, and disenthrall her posterity."

Foresti's eye flashed at this hopeful prediction—the three were standing. Suddenly Foresti spread out his arms and clasped the speaker to his breast, exclaiming, "My friend, my brother!"

This sounds simple enough in the relation, but I thought it quite touching at the time. As the rooms filled with guests, Foresti seated himself by me, and talked in his peculiar, almost boyish way.

"Madam, you have an Italian eye—you ought to go to Italy. It is the place for women of genius" (subsequently Margaret Fuller achieved her destiny there). "There a fine eye makes a fine woman, and they never ask how old you are." I laughed, and he went on, laughing with a sort of boyish glee:

"Here, in this country, girls only are admired—mere girls, without originality, without character. In Italy genius is adored. You are indifferent—you talk just as your thoughts flow. Have you no one wish to impart to the world?"

"Ah! Mr. Foresti, we create what we desire. There is nothing desirable but friendship."

"Friendship! friendship! why, women are incapable of friendship! If they win it, very soon it is love, and very few women have either love or friendship for each other!"

I glanced at Catharine Sedgwick, so much esteemed by all, and particularly by Mr. Foresti. "Surely it is friendship you entertain for her?"

"No no, madam; I love her—as a son would love a mother, or a brother an older sister—a kind of family love."

I smiled at the nice distinction, and saw it must be so, for Miss Sedgwick had been a benefactor to him. Foresti continued:

"Look at all these handsome women here—women of genius! Hear them talk of friendship! They risk love, and would inspire it. There is no such thing as friendship between men and women!"

I differed from him, and said so; and he, in his great, earnest way, persisted, and I began to talk of Italy. "Have you ever been home since your exile?" I asked. He leaned over with his cheek upon his hand, and, placing his elbow upon his knee, replied:

"I am glad you have asked me. Let me tell you something of my history, which else may never be known. It sometimes does us good to let the heart bleed. After the last fatal conflict, I was taken prisoner, like so many others. I was then but little older than that beautiful boy of yours, who is talk-

ing with Alberoni, but, young as I was, I was a lover, and wore my lady's badge to the battle-field. In my bosom I carried the miniature of my betrothed wife. She was wise beyond her years, brave, pious, sympathetic in all my hopes for our country. How pure, how good she was!" His voice faltered, and he dashed a tear from his eyes.

"I had a sister also, a noble woman, who gave me her entire sympathy. You know the sad story of our defeat. Some were put to death. Silvio Pellico, Maroncelli, and I, were condemned to die together. We mounted the fatal steps, and stood upon the scaffold, all hung with black, and a thousand sad eyes looking upward to see us die. The great bell tolled, and this was the signal of death. Then an officer appeared, and our sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life, and we at length were lodged in the prison of Spielberg. Are you tired? do you wish me to go on?" he asked, suddenly.

"Oh, yes, if you will."

"After twelve years, twelve long years, the choice was given us to be forever limited to our estates, or go into perpetual exile. Maroncelli, as you see, had lost a leg by the bad air and bad diet of the prison, and he as well as I longed for unlimited freedom—Europe was too small for us, and we came here. Silvio Pellico, an author, and having family claims, remained a prisoner in Italy."

"And your betrothed—did you never see her again?"

"I will tell you. Such had been the vigilance of our keepers in prison, that we had received little intelligence of our friends and kindred through those long years. I had learned that when the great bell tolled the signal of death, my sister had thrown a black veil over her head, and this badge of mourning she wore till her death. I was seized at length with a dreadful homesickness—oh, such a longing for home that I must see it or die! It could not be resisted, and I disguised myself as a beggar and found my way back to the home of my childhood. I wanted to know all the worst. In our country, the common people hang about the gates of old houses, and are not ashamed to take what they need from the inmates, and they sleep, or sing, or recite verses, and nobody cares, or, if they do care, they drive them away. I loitered round the place in this way, and sang a song which my sister and I used to sing when we were children. After a while a tall, thin woman, dressed in deep mourning, came out and asked some question of the porter. It was my sister.

"'Bring this poor man in, and give him something to eat, he looks ill,' she said. We knew each other upon the instant, but gave no sign of it.

"That night, when all was still, my sister came to the shed where she had ordered me to be taken and cared for." Here Foresti and I were both weeping.

"I remained several weeks about the premises, knowing death would be the penalty of detection. I now learned the fate of my betrothed, and knew I had no right to carry in my bosom the miniature which had so long been my companion. She was married. That was a sad journey I took to take one last look of her, and then leave my country forever.

"I saw her seated in the garden, with her babe in her arms. I stood for long, looking at her pale, still face, and—yes, I wept a great deal. Then I persuaded a boy to carry my little package to her where she sat under the vines—the miniature and a lock of golden hair, for she was a blonde, which is a rare type of beauty in Italy.

"I waited to see it placed in her hands; she looked surprised, held the parcel for some time, and seemed uncertain what to do with it. At last she cut the string that bound it. She gazed upon the contents, and turned quite pale. Suddenly she went in; and, as she passed, her robe touched me. I did not speak. I had done what a man of honor should do. I never saw her again."

"How could she have been willing to marry?" I exclaimed.

"An Italian girl is trained to obedience," he replied. "She is passionate, but submissive. Priest and parent hold her in check till she is married, and then her husband. Thus she is bound by a kind of triple bondage—parental, church, and conjugal authority. I confess, madam, I think the American girl has too much freedom."

And thus ended this sorrowful history, which I at the time recorded in my journal.

For many years Foresti was a teacher of the Italian language in New York. Subsequent to the time of which I speak above, he joined the patriots of 1848; upon the failure of that revolutionary movement, he returned again to the United States. Having become a naturalized citizen of this country, he was appointed consul to Genoa, at which place he died, in 1859, I think. Few men have enjoyed a larger share of public esteem than this large-souled exile to our shores. Though he failed to see the enfranchisement of Italy, and though her *status* is inferior to the full cup of freedom which he longed to see her obtain, it is a pleasant thing to know that time at length will bring about all that the best wishers of our humanity have toiled and bled to obtain. No aspiration is lost, no noble impulse heaved in vain, but, in good time, the ideal will be the real, the hope fruition.

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

IN A LAW-OFFICE.

AUGUST.

I.

THE avenue's deserted—Broadway has not a shopper;
The counter-jumper finds his time hang heavy on his hands;
For to be in town in August is not considered proper,
And the girls are hunting husbands at the springs, or on the sands.

II.

Amusements are not plenty — the blondes, with songs and dances,
Brave the mercury at ninety-five, in Wallack's little den
(The blondes, with golden tresses, and rather bruzen glances);
And Thomas plays his symphonies to crowds of thirsty men.

III.

I sit among my law-books, with neither vest nor coat on,
And feebly wish that I was *there*—I cannot wish her here;
And then I rise and dip my head in more than tepid Croton,
And wander into Rudolph's, and drink a stein of beer.

IV.

For she is up at Newport, with those three pretty cousins,
And she is flirting with the yachtsmen, who have nothing else to do;
And betting on the races—winning hearts and gloves by dozens—
And I must go to chambers, to get this motion through.

OCTOBER.

I.

The air is cool and bracing, the sky is rather bluer
Than I was, when in August, I thus bemoaned my lot;
Again the charmers show themselves along the avenue, or
Search for shades of double zephyr, that the shopman hasn't got.

II.

Again are awells most awful adorning the club-windows,
Or, near the chimes of Trinity, are cornering in stocks;
Or guilding lofty dog-carts, or with fair ones in landaus,
Are driving Jerome Park-ward, to bet among the "jocks."

III.

There is Rubinstein, and Mario, and Lucca, most delightful;
Half a hundred shows of divers sorts to choose from every night;
And there's plenty to amuse one in the bloodthirsty and frightful
Way the editors are managing the presidential fight.

IV.

Still I sit among my law-books, over head and ears in paper;
But you'll be surprised perhaps to learn that she is not in town;
No—I am safe at present from a matrimonial scrape—for
Yesterday she sailed for Europe—married—happy man named Brown.