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The Machine for Grinding Poetry

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the darling hero of England, on board his own swift *Victory*, moved out, followed and surrounded by the rest. They had approached. Just then, while every eye was fixed, every lip compressed, every countenance firm, and every heart quickened, dilated 'twixt hope and fear, there went looming up the immortal words, "*England expects every man to do his duty!*" In that word *England* was a charm that sent a thrill of enthusiasm, which resulted in the most glorious triumph that has ever graced the annals of British fame.

When disunion, that hideous monster, would snap asunder, Nationality reconciles clashing interests, and neutralizes jarring powers. When invasion, that blighting sirocco, that fiery deluge would sweep across the land, it arouses, animates, fires the hearts of the people. Clinging to it, our fathers and mothers, and brothers, are preserved amid the whirl of human passion. And now as I stand surrounded by the relics of ancient might, the awful sublimity of Roman greatness heaving in its last struggle, rushing upon my vision, would inspire me to the prophecy of Roman resurrection. And still impressed with the magic power of my theme, I would bid that vein of sympathy which has long flowed for Ireland, Flow on! For who knows but Ireland, quickened into life by the stirring memory of her Emmetts, her O'Connells and her Mitchells, and maddened by the sad spectacle of an O'Brien's gallows, may yet rise triumphant from the dust and tears of her thralldom!

THE MACHINE FOR GRINDING POETRY.

"That some things can be done as well as others," is by no means improbable. And, in this enlightened and progressive age, when lightning is trained and taught to speak, it is not probable that speaking of machines for making poetry will be considered, by men of science at least, as attempting to impose upon the credulity of the people; and if, indeed, such were the case, we feel ourself prepared, by a practical illustration, to establish the theory.

Of the inventor we know nothing but what is to be learned from the invention; that is, he lived, and if not dead, is still living. Of the machine we know a great deal, but shall say nothing, it being able to speak for itself.

Johnny L. was what might be classed in the scale of talent as a poetical genius. We have arrived at this conclusion after having enjoyed the extreme pleasure of perusing his only production, "*The Lover's Soliloquy*," strictly speaking, a scintillation from an intellectual star of the first magnitude; but, alas! by some ill-fated mistake, he, together with his production, has found a peaceful slumber in the archives of oblivion.

After having spent some time in composing "The Lover's Soliloquy," our hero, from the rapidity with which poetry was produced "by them ere Northern chaps," had come to the conclusion that they must have some kind of a machine for the purpose of making it. Of course, a trip to the "Quaker city" was determined upon. The necessary arrangements having been completed, Johnny found himself seated in a car bound for "the land of promise;" where, after an age to his anxious spirit, he had the extreme pleasure of planting his foot on the pavement. On casting a glance at the various curiosities, his eye was soon fixed upon a sign in front of him, having on it, in large letters, "Poetical Machines for sale." It is useless to say he went in, and came out with one under his arm. He was soon "on his way rejoicing," and, with a beam of pleasure in his eye, was, in an indescribably short space of time, standing at the gate of his home.

"Johnny, dear, what have you there?" said the mother, as the son entered the gate of the homestead. "Why, ma'am, I've been to the great city, and it's a machine for making poetry I got there. The man I got it from says it's an all-fired good one, and works to perfection." The old lady looked somewhat surprised—the old man, looking a little sorter "'twixt a sweat and a stew," went away muttering something like "nonsense;" but soon returned, thinking it might do.

After Johnny had rested some little, he determined upon making a trial of the machine. Arrangements were soon made, and the magical box placed on the table. "Now, dad," said Johnny, "take this string and hold it tight. Mam, you take this wire, and mind them pegs in the end of the box." Johnny turned the crank; around went the wheels. The old man and old woman stood in breathless silence, with mouths wide open, eyes protruding, anxiously awaiting the result, not dreaming of its success.

Soon a gentle murmur is heard to issue from the box, more and more audible, till at length came rolling forth, in a slow measured tone,—

Crickets were chirping on the hearth,
And snow was cov'ring fast the earth,
As through the barnyard crept a bear,
And stole the biggest sheep was there.

"Heaven save us!" exclaimed the old woman, "the old pet ewe is dead!" "Zounds!" muttered the old man, "my gun's over at Tom Hanson's, and I can't kill the old scamp." "Now, Mam, I knowed you wouldn't keep them pegs in!" Johnny put the peg in place, and turned on,—

All clear and cloudless was the sky,
The zephyr slept upon the plain,
While thunder rolled his car on high,
And thick and fast fell drops of rain;
The lightnings flashed, the thunders pealed
Along the sky from north to south,
The puppy barked, the piggy squealed
And carried wheat straws in his mouth.

"Bless his dear little soul!" exclaimed the old lady. "Johnny, go bring him in the kitchen; he'll drown out there in the rain." "Mam, it ain't rainin'; dad's only let go that string." The old man took the string, and the machine went on—

O'er the hill lived the lassie that I loved the best,
In a vine-covered cottage, surrounded with flowers;
Close under her window was a humming bird's nest,
Secure from the blasts and the cold drenching showers.

"Du say!" cried the old woman, "Johnny's in love with that Sall Muggins." "Thunder!" exclaimed the old man, "I'll trounce the scamp till he'll wish he'd never seen her." The machine went on—

One morning, bright and early, old grimalkin espied
The nest of young chirpers hanging snugly on the wall;
He got up into the window, after having often tried,
And he broke down the little nest, and eat up them ev'ry one.

"Cruel wretch!" shouted the old woman—"if I had that cat I'd wring her neck off." "Mam, there's two pegs out. I knowed you wouldn't keep 'em in." Johnny put the pegs in. The machine continued—

The sun had set in the western sky,
The chickens all had gone to rest,
When master fox came slipping by,
And killed two chickens, and broke up the old blue hen's nest.

"Mercy on me!" shouted the old woman; "set the dogs on him; he's broke all the eggs, and I can't go to market to-morrow!" "The band's off that wheel, dad." Johnny put the band in place, and the machine went on—

The sun shone hot—all nature looked gay—
The farmers were turning the sweet-scented hay;
The children were plucking the flowers so sweet,
As Tom Flint's hogs broke into the wheat.

"It's all over now!" shouted the old man. "Here, Watch! Here, Bounce! Come, Johnny, go kill them tarnal hogs; they'll eat all the wheat up!" "Dad, the hogs ain't in the wheat; you only let go that string. If you had held on, it would have done it up brown that time, certain. Now hold tight; let's try once more."

The dogs did bark, the cat did mew,
The moon shone silver bright,
When out from behind the kitchen cupboard an old bat flew,
And put the children in a fright.

"Knock it down with a broom!" cried the old woman. "Smash it to pieces!" shouted the old man, suiting the action to the word. And from the broken murmurs of the box was heard—

He hit Johnny a rap across the head,
And sent him blubbering away to his bed.