

On a Blank Leaf in 'The Marble Faun'

Elia Wilkinson Peattie

Table of Contents

<u>On a Blank Leaf in 'The Marble Faun'</u>	1
<u>Elia Wilkinson Peattie</u>	2

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I CANNOT tell why these sad oaken groves
Should bring to mind the gay and mystic glades
Where Donatello danced;
I dare not guess, while my eye, restless, roves
This stormy lake, and daylight fades,
Why I have chanced
To dream of some bright pool where shimmering lie
The tender shadows of the Tuscan sky.

I sing no songs that are not grave and old!
Why should the merry Tuscan haunt my dreams?
How light of foot was he! —
The sky is dun, the wind is wet and cold,
Dead, drear, and dull each swelling sand-dune seems;
What then to me
Is all this wild, midsummer fantasy,
This mellow, mad, and witching mockery?

'T was something in your eyes — I swear it, friend,
For you seemed part of stream, and wood, and field.
I've watched your soul grow young!
On days of sun, into the joy you blend,
On days of shade, into the grief you yield;
The balance hung
On perfect scale, which lightest touch might sway,
The perfect glass reflect the palest morning ray.

Oh, learn no wisdom, for that may bring grief;
And love no woman, for 't will sure bring pain;
Be Donatello still!
Believe me, friend, this learning is a thief,
And where it thrives the simple joys are slain.
Ah, drink your fill
Of sky and hill, of sun and wind and sea;
Be thou my faun, but I no Miriam to thee.

Elia W. Peattie